OFFICIAL PREQUEL TO TRANSFORMERS: DARK OF THE MOON!

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BARBER
GRIFFITH

TRANSFORMERS
DARK OF THE MOON

FOUNDATION

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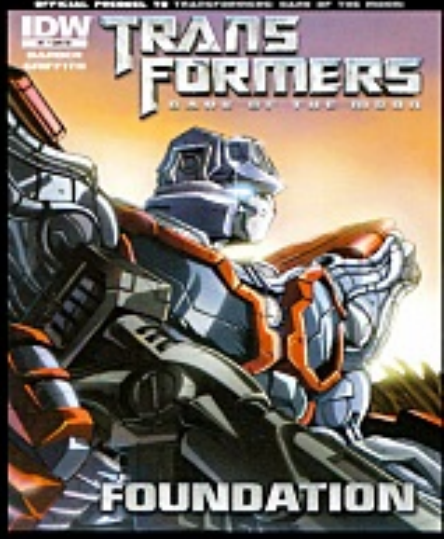

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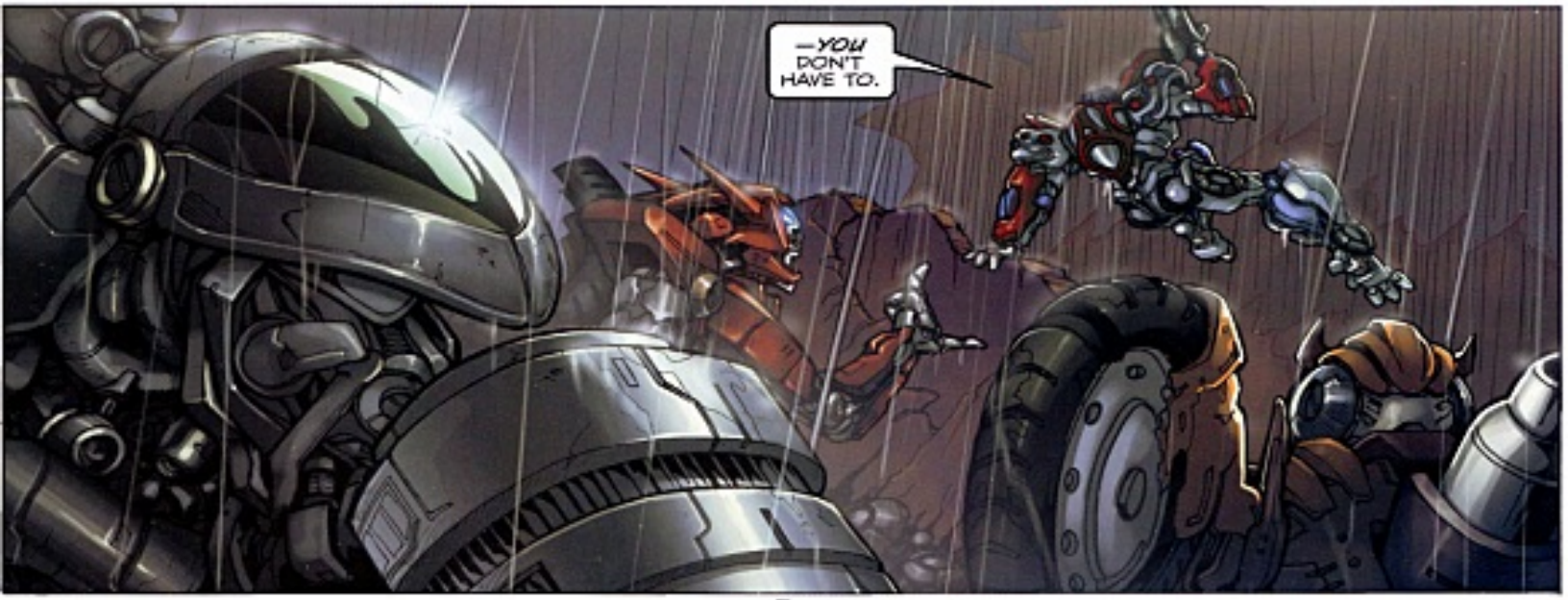
THE RAIN BURNS INTO MY METAL SKIN.
COLD, CORROSIVE CYBERTRONIAN RAIN.
I LIKE THE WAY IT FEELS. IT FEELS REAL.
MASTER... THIS ISN'T... WELL, THE RAIN ISN'T GOOD FOR YOU, MASTER.
HE'S OUT THERE, STARSCREAM.
Y-YES, LORD MEGATRON, BUT...
HE'S COMING FOR ME.
AND OPTIMUS PRIME WON'T STOP UNTIL I'M DEAD.
HA HA HA HA HA!

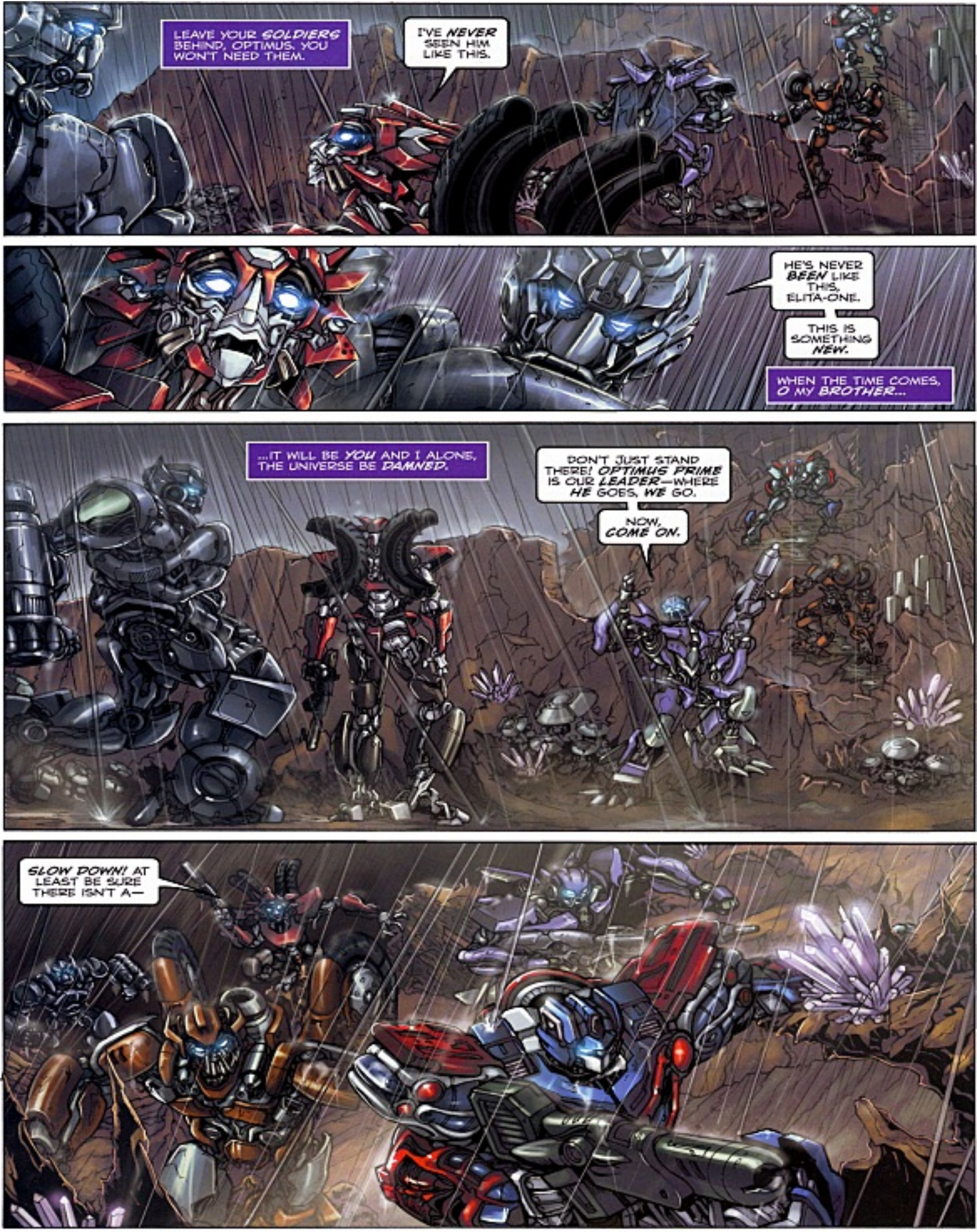
WHAT DO *YOU* FEEL, VALIANT *OPTIMUS*?
ANGER? A LUST FOR VENGEANCE? FOR *VICTORY* AT ANY *COST*?

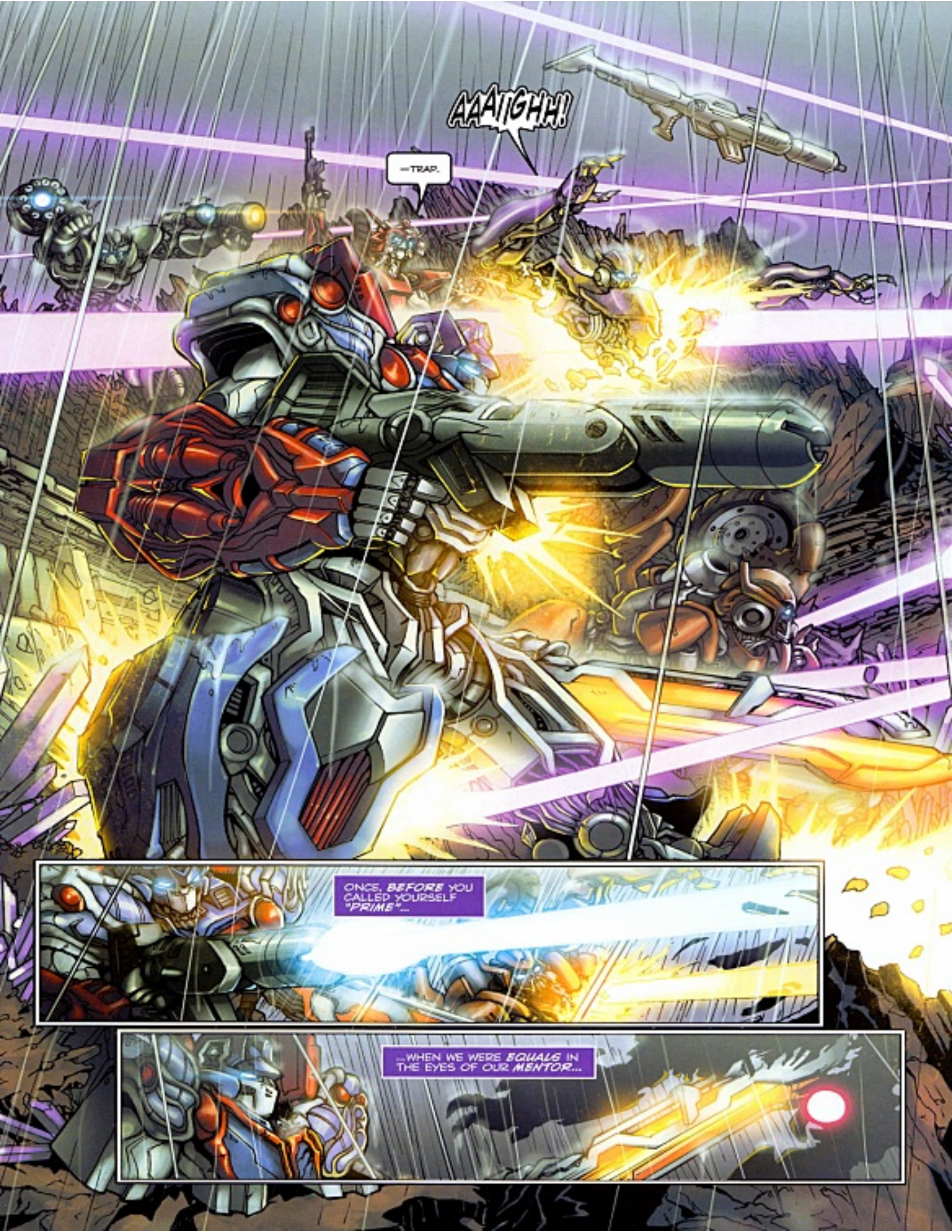
THERE'S A *PURITY* IN THAT, MY BROTHER.
ONE THAT YOU'VE ALWAYS TRIED TO *DENY*.

OPTIMUS, *WAIT*—
THE TIME FOR *WAITING* IS LONG *PAST*, IRONHIDE.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO *SEE* THIS *THROUGH*—


—*YOU* DON'T HAVE TO.


LEAVE YOUR SOLDIERS BEHIND, OPTIMUS. YOU WON'T NEED THEM.
I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM LIKE THIS.
HE'S NEVER BEEN LIKE THIS, ELITA-ONE.
THIS IS SOMETHING NEW.
WHEN THE TIME COMES, O MY BROTHER...
...IT WILL BE YOU AND I ALONE, THE UNIVERSE BE DAMNED.
DON'T JUST STAND THERE! OPTIMUS PRIME IS OUR LEADER—WHERE HE GOES, WE GO.
NOW, COME ON.
SLOW DOWN! AT LEAST BE SURE THERE ISN'T A—

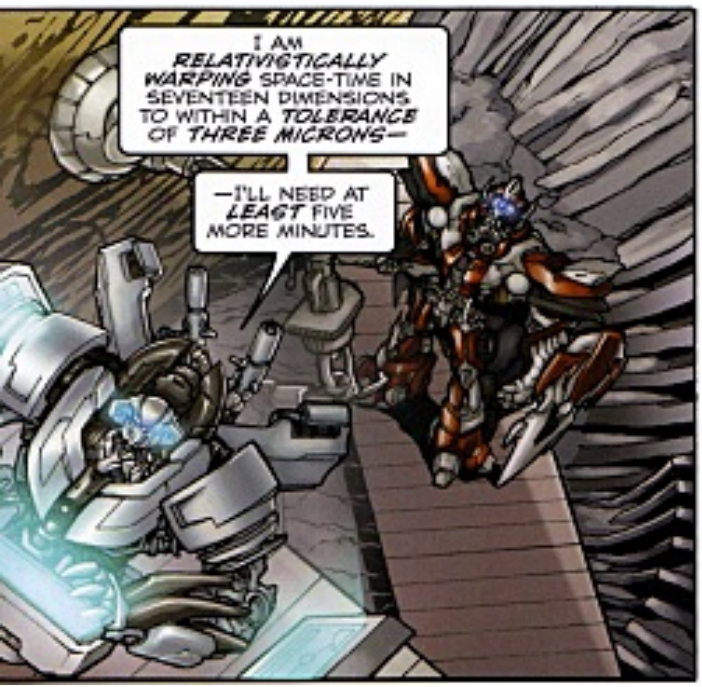

AAAIIGHH!
—TRAP.
ONCE, BEFORE YOU CALLED YOURSELF "PRIME"...
...WHEN WE WERE EQUALS IN THE EYES OF OUR MENTOR...

TIME CHANGES EVERYTHING, MY BROTHER.
...YOU WOULD HAVE NEVER DREAMED OF THIS DAY.
ONCE...

...BUT THAT WAS A *LONG TIME AGO.*

WE PLACED OUR FAITH IN THE *FUTURE* WHEN THE WORLD DOUBTED OUR *MENTOR*...

...THAT IS, UNTIL HE *FOUND* THE *ALLSPARK.*



HOW MUCH *LONGER* DO YOU *NEED*?!

HE TOLD US THE *TALES* OF THE *PRIMES*, HOW THEY USED THE *CUBE* CALLED THE *ALLSPARK* TO GIVE LIFE TO OUR SPECIES OF *AUTONOMOUS ROBOTIC ORGANISMS*.

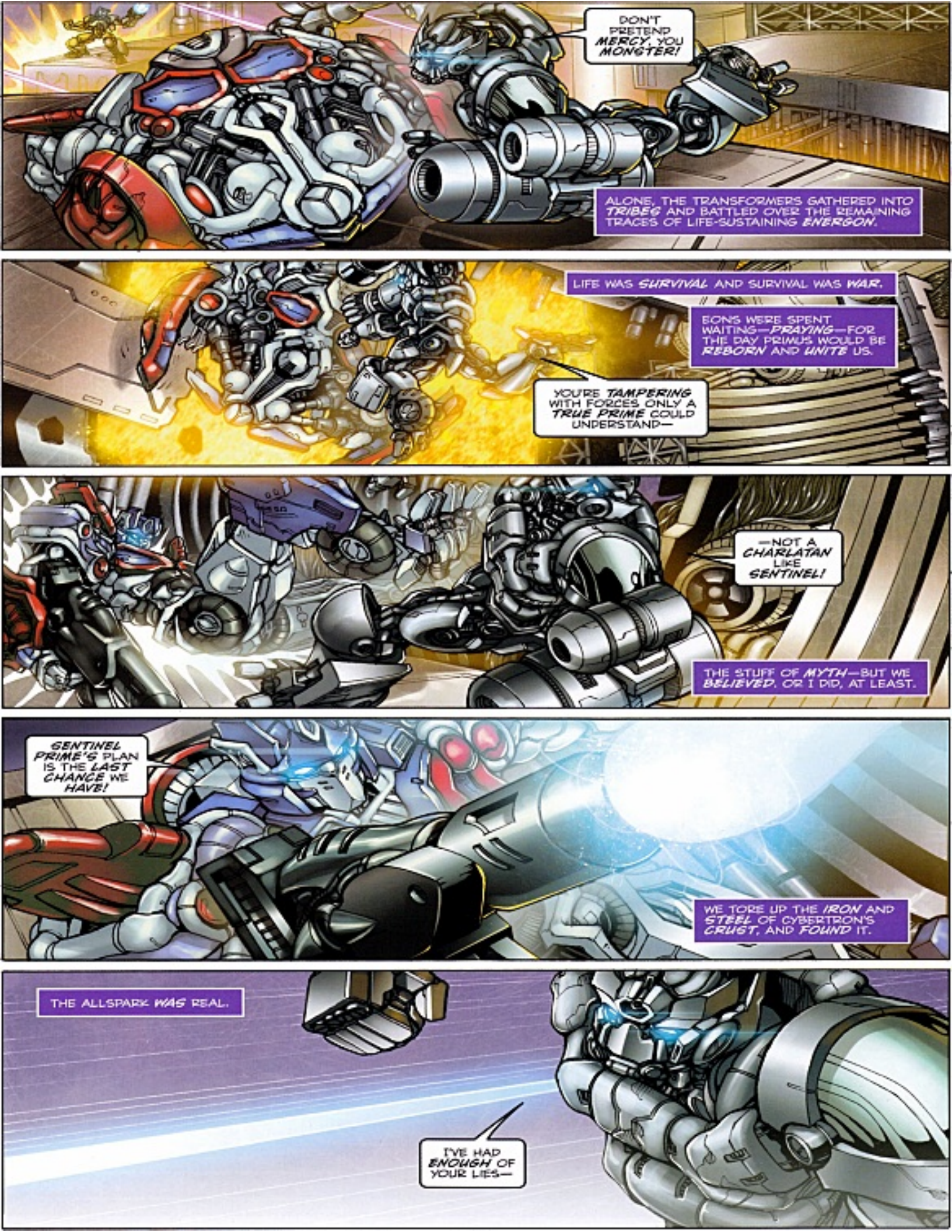
ELITA-ONE—YOU AND *SHOCKWAVE* COVER OUR *RIGHT FLANK*.

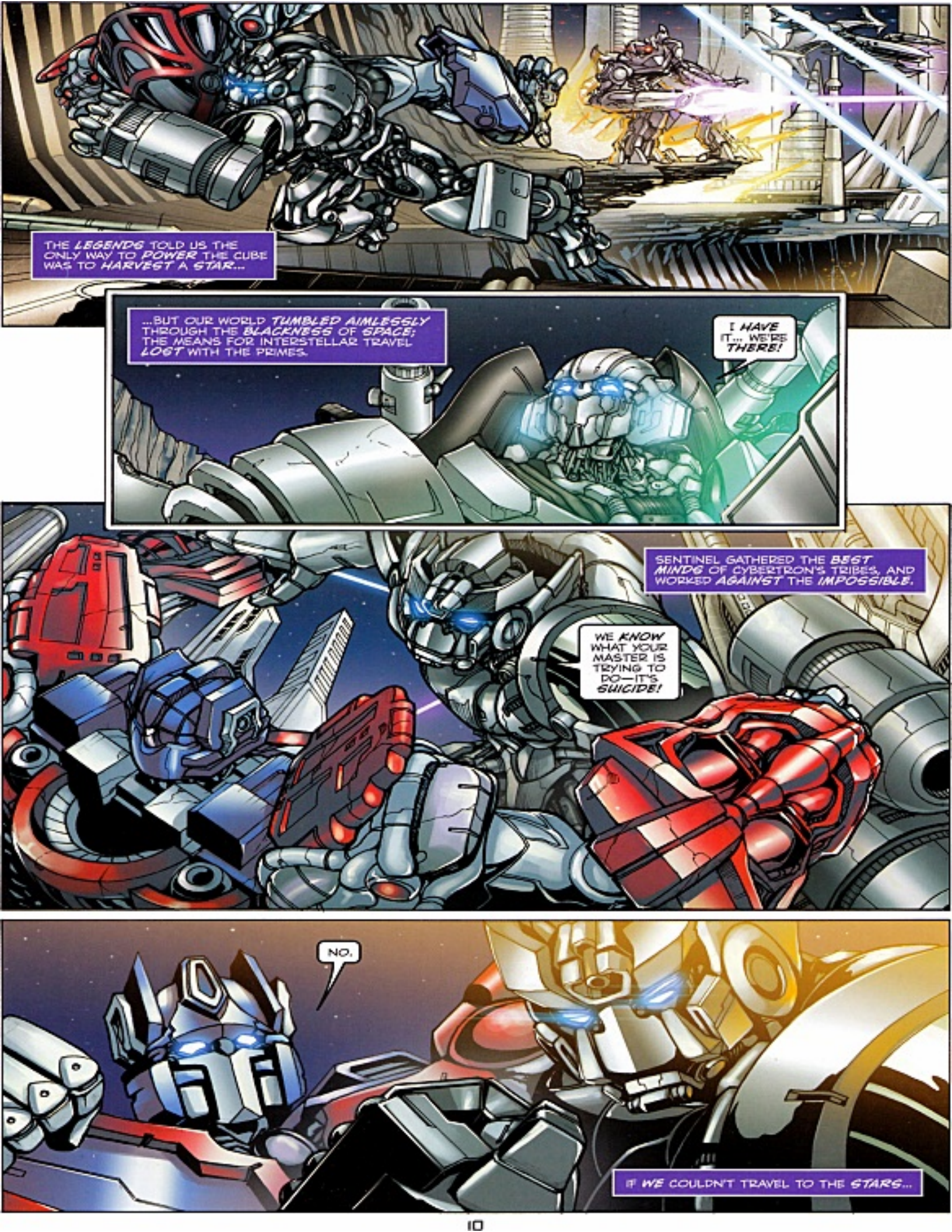
MEGATRON—WE'LL GO UP THE *MIDDLE*.

AND LET'S TRY NOT TO *KILL* ANYONE—THESE MAY BE THETACONS, BUT THEY'RE STILL *TRANSFORMERS!*

OF *COURSE*, OPTIMUS... I'LL DO WHAT I *CAN*.

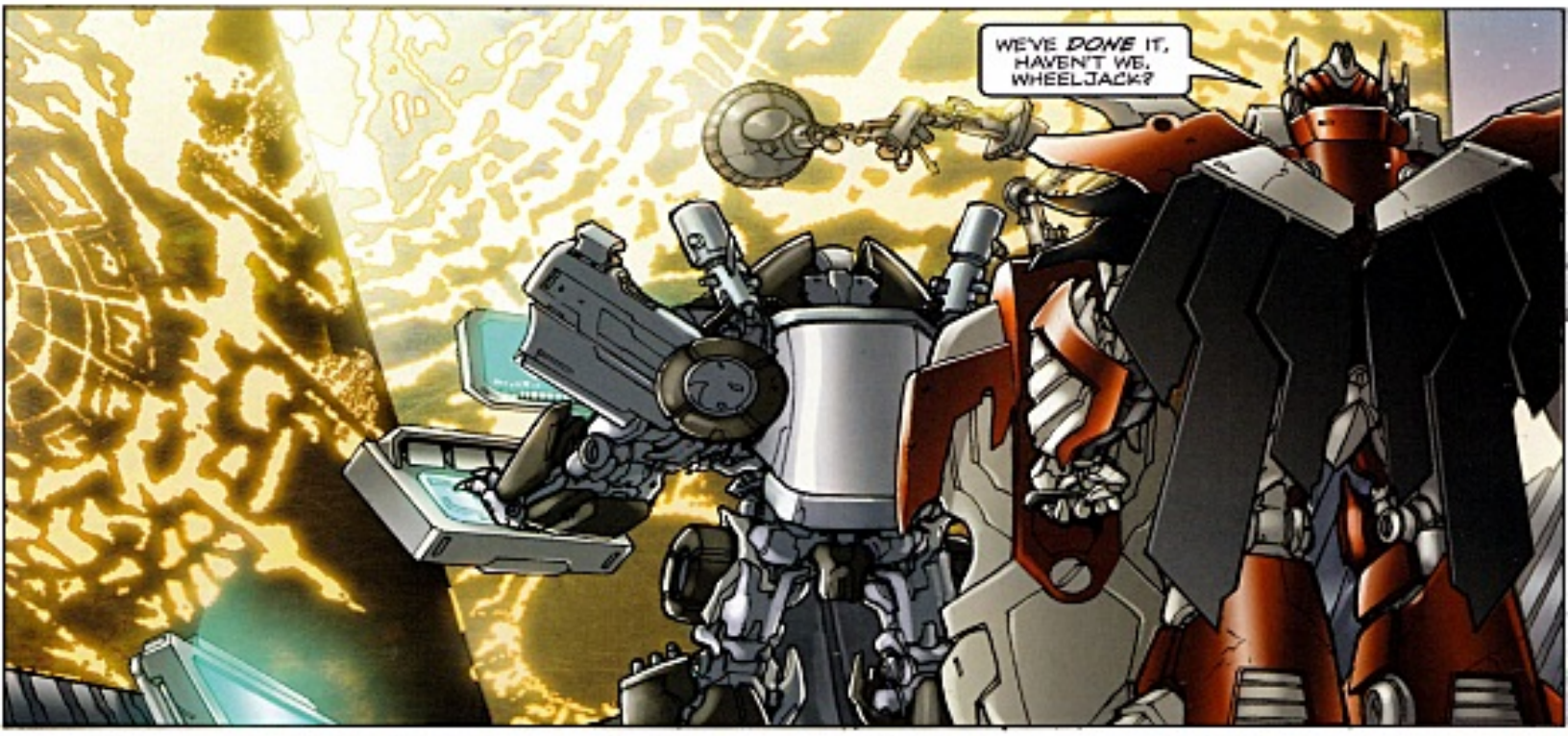
ONE DAY, A PRIME *FELL* AND TOOK THE OTHERS WITH HIM—LEAVING THE ALLSPARK TO *WITHER* AND *DIE*.


DON'T PRETEND MERCY, YOU MONSTER!
ALONE, THE TRANSFORMERS GATHERED INTO TRIBES AND BATTLED OVER THE REMAINING TRACES OF LIFE-SUSTAINING ENERGON.
LIFE WAS SURVIVAL AND SURVIVAL WAS WAR.
EONS WERE SPENT WAITING—PRAYING—FOR THE DAY PRIMUS WOULD BE REBORN AND UNITE US.
YOU'RE TAMPERING WITH FORCES ONLY A TRUE PRIME COULD UNDERSTAND—
—NOT A CHARLATAN LIKE SENTINEL!
THE STUFF OF MYTH—BUT WE BELIEVED, OR I DID, AT LEAST.
SENTINEL PRIME'S PLAN IS THE LAST CHANCE WE HAVE!
WE TORE UP THE IRON AND STEEL OF CYBERTRON'S CRUST, AND FOUND IT.
THE ALLSPARK WAS REAL.
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR LIES—


THE LEGENDS TOLD US THE ONLY WAY TO POWER THE CUBE WAS TO HARVEST A STAR...
...BUT OUR WORLD TUMBLED AIMLESSLY THROUGH THE BLACKNESS OF SPACE; THE MEANS FOR INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL LOST WITH THE PRIMES.
I HAVE IT... WE'RE THERE!
SENTINEL GATHERED THE BEST MINDS OF CYBERTRON'S TRIBES, AND WORKED AGAINST THE IMPOSSIBLE.
WE KNOW WHAT YOUR MASTER IS TRYING TO DO—IT'S SUICIDE!
NO.
IF WE COULDN'T TRAVEL TO THE STARS...

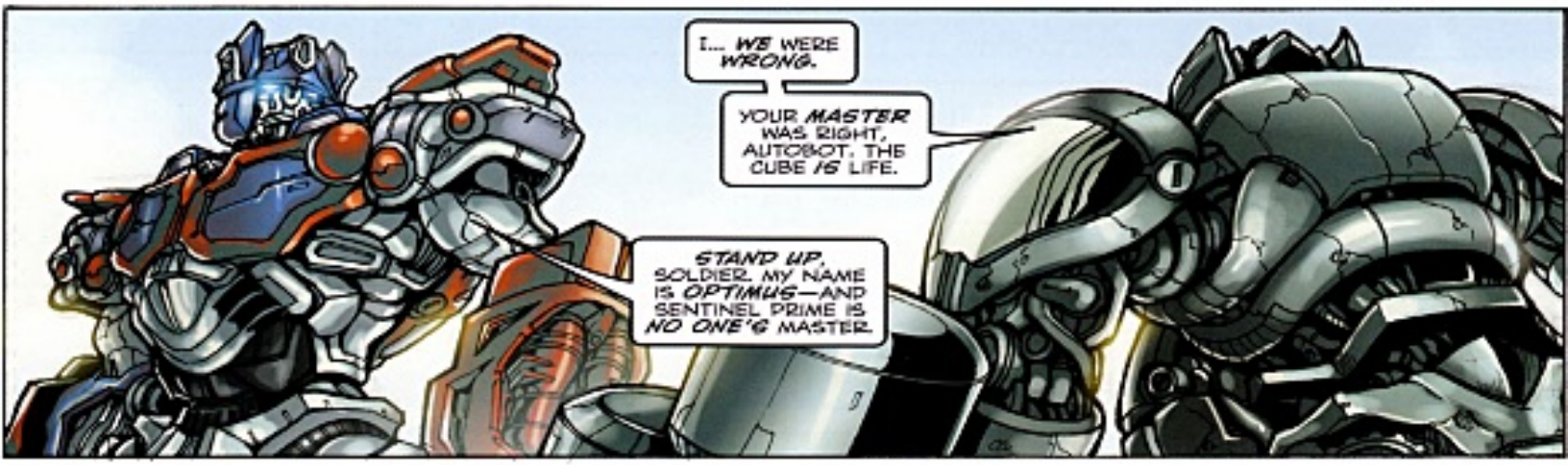
...WE WOULD MAKE A *STAR* TRAVEL TO *US*.

WE WARPED THE FABRIC OF REALITY TO DRAW A SUN TO CYBERTRON, AND HOPED THE CALCULATIONS WERE CORRECT...
...THAT MERE PROXIMITY WOULD BE ENOUGH TO POWER THE CUBE...
...AND PROVIDE ENOUGH ENERGON TO SATIATE OUR WORLD'S HUNGER.


WE'VE DONE IT, HAVEN'T WE, WHEELJACK?

AFTER SO MANY HUNDREDS OF QUARTEXES... OF WAR AND FAMINE...
INDEED, IT SEEMS WE'VE SAVED THE WORLD, PRIME.

I CAN FEEL....
...I FEEL.... ALIVE.
LIKE YOU SAID.

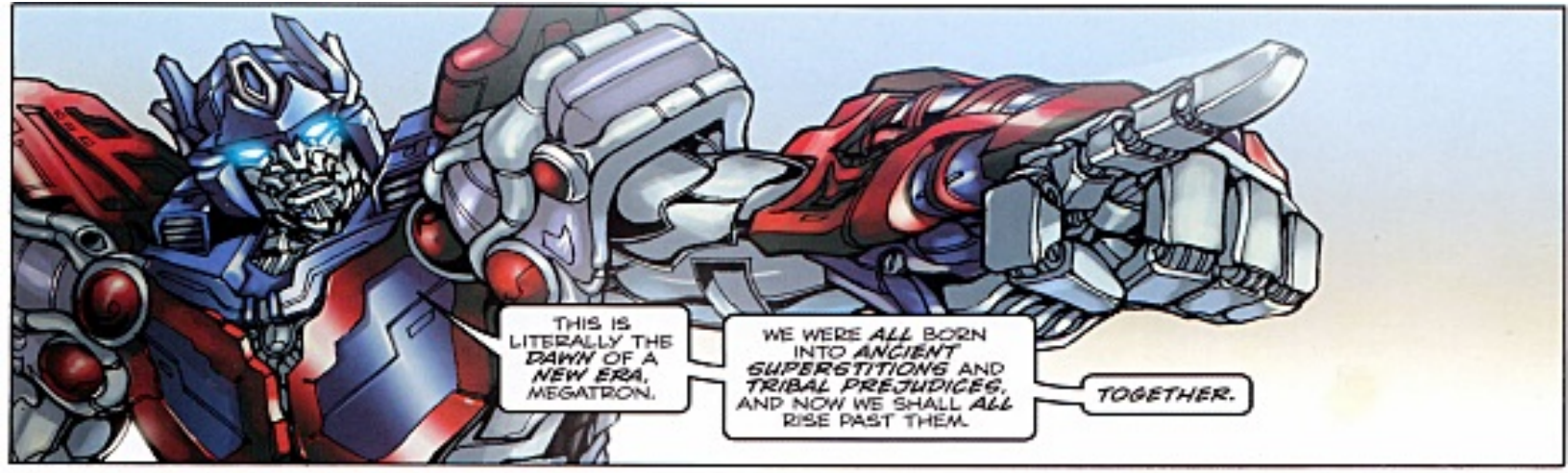

I... WE WERE WRONG.
YOUR MASTER WAS RIGHT, AUTOBOT. THE CUBE IS LIFE.
STAND UP, SOLDIER. MY NAME IS OPTIMUS—AND SENTINEL PRIME IS NO ONE'S MASTER.

NO TRANSFORMER WILL EVER AGAIN BE FORCED TO BOW DOWN TO ANOTHER.

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, OPTIMUS. HOW MANY OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS HAVE DIED AT SEPARATIST HANDS?

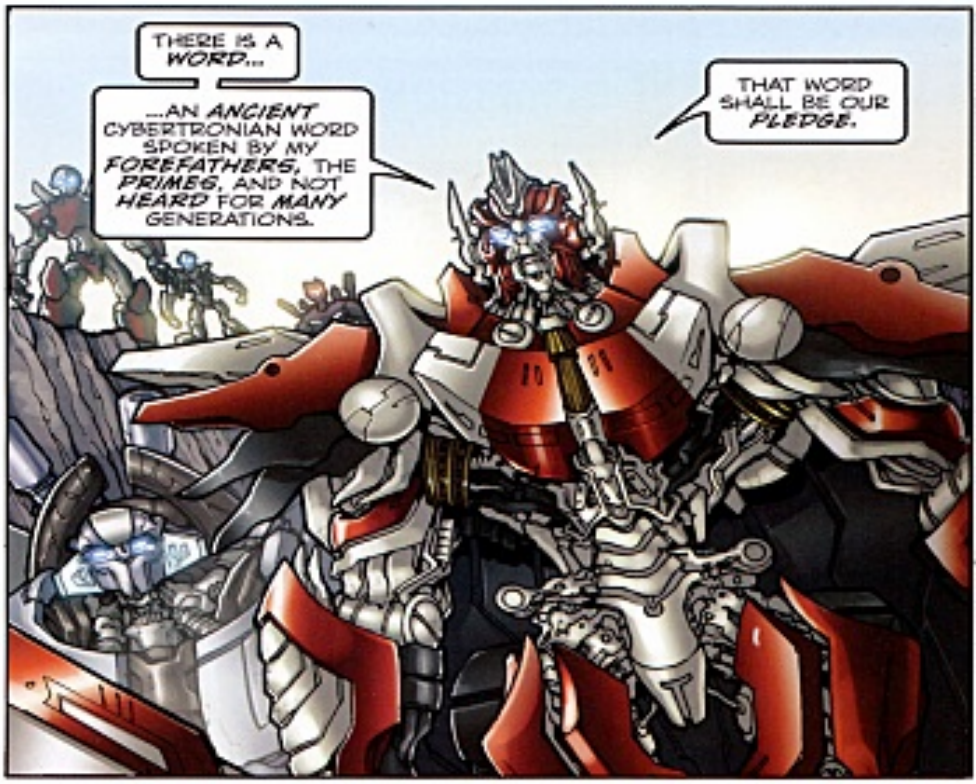
I HATE THE WAR AS MUCH AS ANY OF US—
—BUT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN OVER LONG AGO IF WE'D DONE WHAT WAS NECESSARY TO GET THESE SAVAGES OUT OF OUR WAY...

"WHAT WAS NECESSARY"?! THESE ARE MY PEOPLE!
MEGATRON, STAND DOWN!


THIS IS LITERALLY THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA, MEGATRON.
WE WERE ALL BORN INTO ANCIENT SUPERSTITIONS AND TRIBAL PREJUDICES, AND NOW WE SHALL ALL RISE PAST THEM.
TOGETHER.

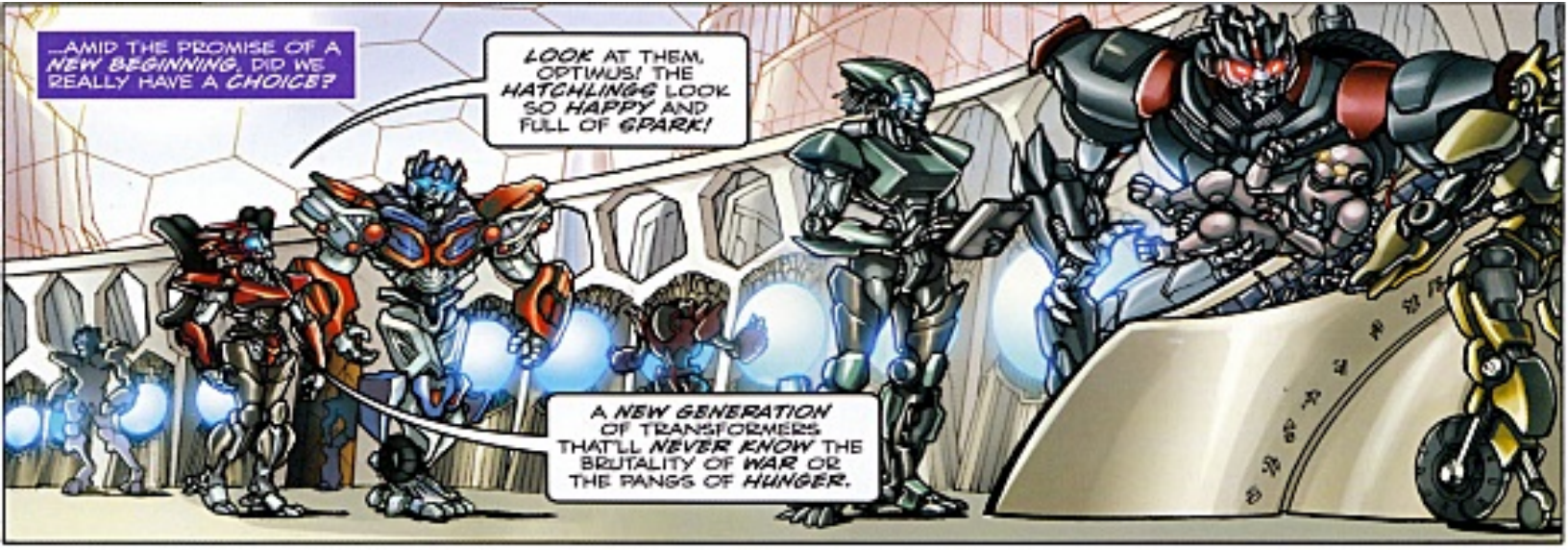
YES... YES. IT WAS THE HEAT OF BATTLE SPEAKING.
IF THIS TRANSFORMER CAN FORGIVE ME, THEN I SHALL FORGIVE HIM.

AGREED. AND CALL ME IRONHIDE.
WITH THE CUBE UNDER YOUR CONTROL, NONE COULD STAND IN YOUR WAY. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO SUBJUGATE US, THEN WHAT—


THERE IS A WORD...
...AN ANCIENT CYBERTRONIAN WORD SPOKEN BY MY FOREFATHERS, THE PRIMES, AND NOT HEARD FOR MANY GENERATIONS.
THAT WORD SHALL BE OUR PLEDGE.

AND WHAT IS THE WORD, SENTINEL PRIME?

"FREEDOM."
AND IT IS THE RIGHT OF *ALL* SENTIENT BEINGS.
WE STOOD *TOGETHER*, OPTIMUS, IN THE GLOW OF THE *SUN* AND THE *ALLSPARK*; IN THE WARMTH OF THAT *FIRST DAY*. I *WONDER*...

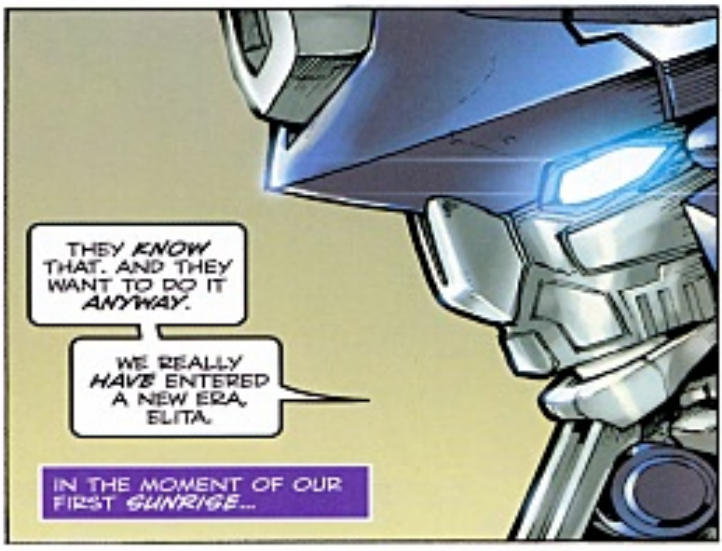

...AMID THE PROMISE OF A NEW BEGINNING, DID WE REALLY HAVE A CHOICE?
LOOK AT THEM, OPTIMUS! THE HATCHLINGS LOOK SO HAPPY AND FULL OF SPARK!
A NEW GENERATION OF TRANSFORMERS THAT'LL NEVER KNOW THE BRUTALITY OF WAR OR THE PANGS OF HUNGER.

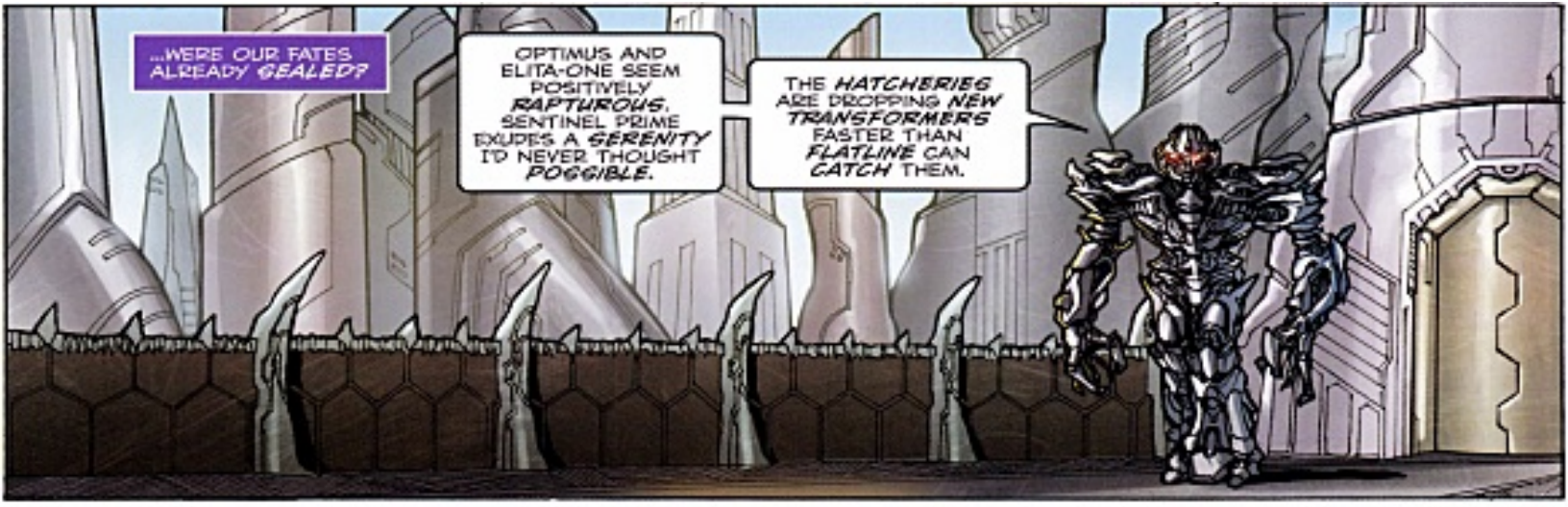
WE CAN ALL BUILD OUR FUTURE INTO WHATEVER WE WISH, ELITA-ONE.
WE CAN CHANGE OUR LIVES AS EASILY AS WE CAN OUR SHAPES...

...SO WHAT DO WE DO?
I HAVE TWO LITTLE SISTERS IN METROTITAN. I'D LIKE TO SEE THEM AGAIN.

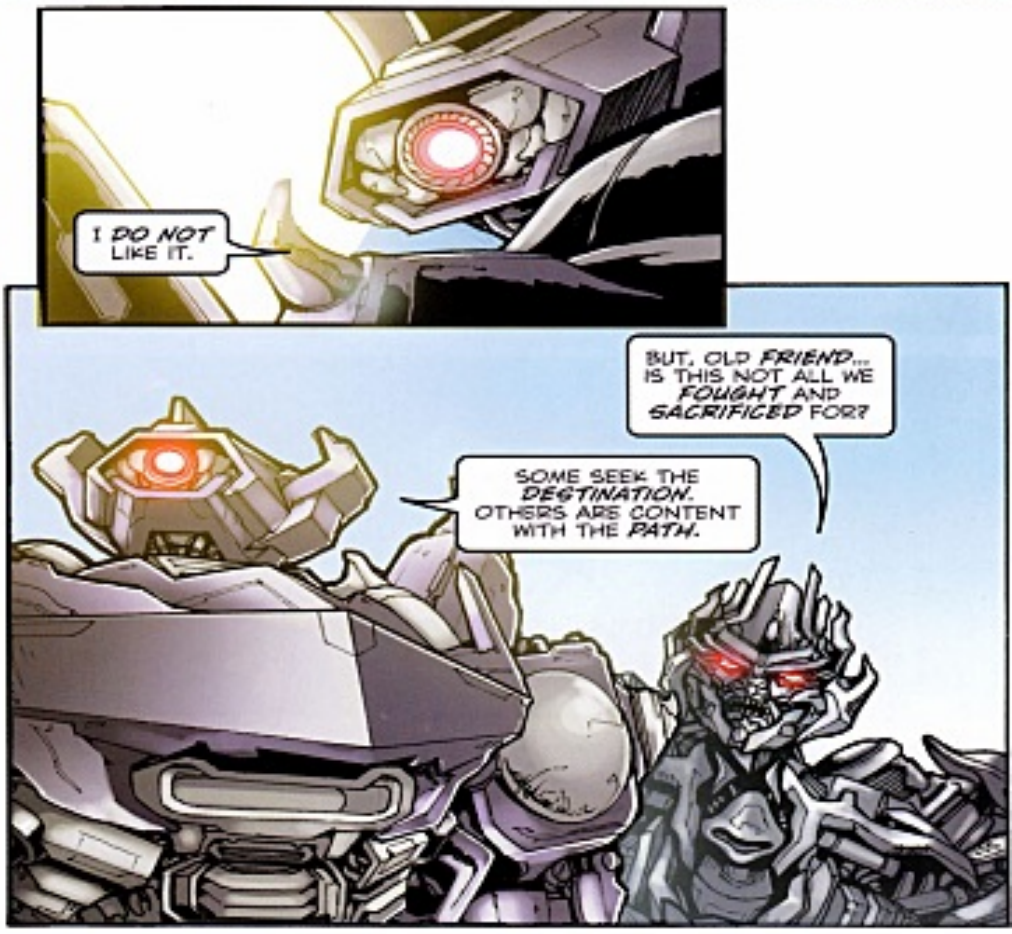
YOU... YOU NEVER TOLD ME.
IT NEVER SEEMED IMPORTANT.

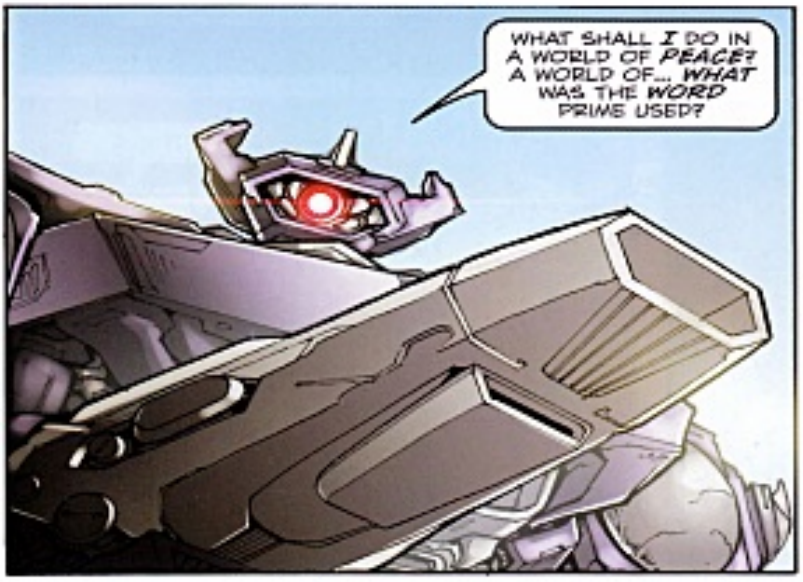
WELL.
IRONHIDE SPOKE WITH HIS TRIBAL ELDERS. THEY PLAN TO BUILD A TEMPLE AROUND THE ALLSPARK, AS A WAY OF MAKING AMENDS.
BUT THERE'S NO NEED...
...NO ONE WOULD TRY TO DAMAGE THE ONLY THING HOLDING US IN ORBIT.


THEY KNOW THAT. AND THEY WANT TO DO IT ANYWAY.
WE REALLY HAVE ENTERED A NEW ERA, ELITA.
IN THE MOMENT OF OUR FIRST SUNRISE...


...WERE OUR FATES ALREADY SEALED?
OPTIMUS AND ELITA-ONE SEEM POSITIVELY RAPTUROUS. SENTINEL PRIME EXUDES A SERENITY I'D NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE.
THE HATCHERIES ARE DROPPING NEW TRANSFORMERS FASTER THAN FLATLINE CAN CATCH THEM.

AND YOU, TOO, SHOCKWAVE?
I FIND YOU BASKING IN OUR NEW SUN?
IT SEARS MY OPTICAL PROCESSOR, MEGATRON.


I DO NOT LIKE IT.
BUT, OLD FRIEND... IS THIS NOT ALL WE FOUGHT AND SACRIFICED FOR?
SOME SEEK THE DESTINATION. OTHERS ARE CONTENT WITH THE PATH.


WHAT SHALL I DO IN A WORLD OF PEACE? A WORLD OF... WHAT WAS THE WORD PRIME USED?

"FREEDOM," SHOCKWAVE.
HE SAID "FREEDOM."

WHATEVER THE CASE, AS THE SUN SET FOR THE FIRST TIME, I FINALLY *UNDERSTOOD* YOU, OPTIMUS.

YOU SENT FOR ME, SENTINEL PRIME?

OPTIMUS! YES—COME HERE!

SEE HOW THE *SUN* SEEMS TO MOVE ACROSS THE *SKY*? AND NOW IT *DIPS* BEYOND THE ANCIENT CITY... BUT WORRY NOT!

IN MERE HOURS, IT WILL SEEM TO *RISE AGAIN* ON THE HORIZON *OPPOSITE*—AS CYBERTRON HERSELF *TURNS* SO THAT WE MAY BEGIN A *NEW* SOLAR CYCLE.

NOW, GO *GATHER* YOUR THINGS. WE TRAVEL TO *TRIPTICON* WHEN THE SKY IS *BRIGHT AGAIN*.

WHAT? S-SENTINEL... I WANTED TO GO TO *METROTITAN* WITH *ELITA-ONE*. SHE HAS—

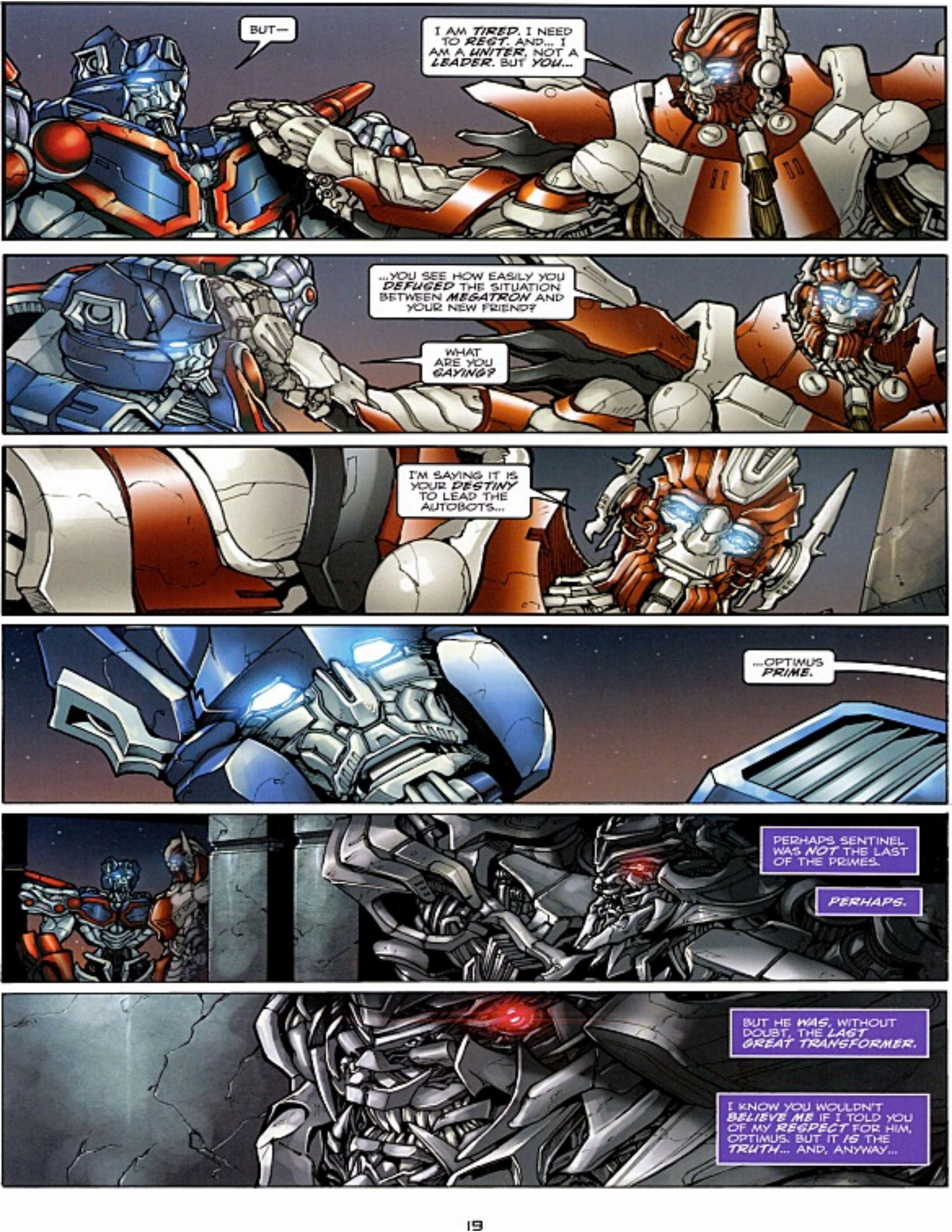
THERE WILL BE TIME FOR THAT IN THE *FUTURE*, MY BOY! WE HAVE *MUCH* TO DO.

CYBERTRON HAS NOT BEEN *UNITED* SINCE THE ERA OF THE *PRIMES*. WE MUST ESTABLISH A *GOVERNMENT*, OPTIMUS.

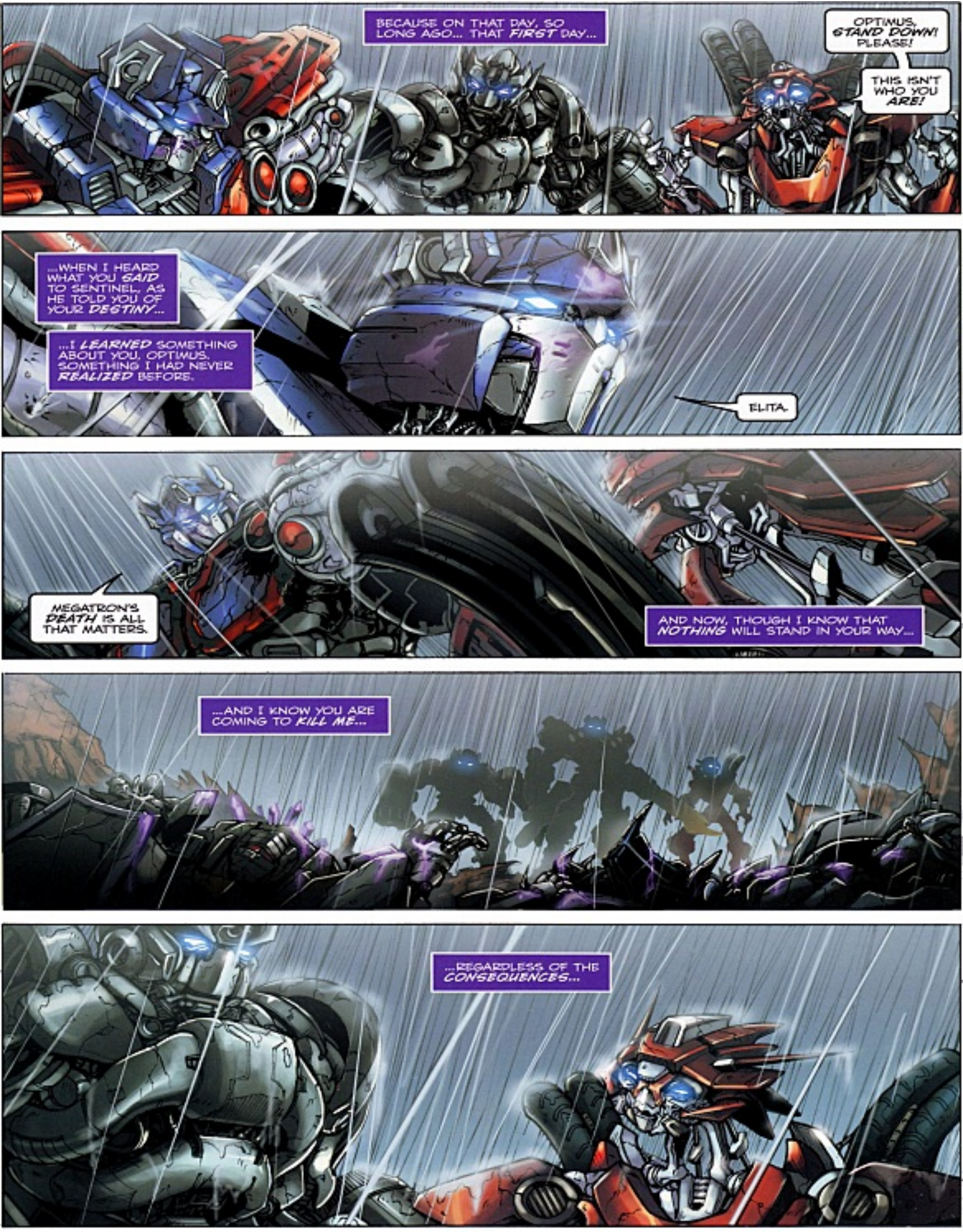
BUT... WHAT IS THERE TO ESTABLISH? ALL THE *TRIBAL LEADERS* GAVE THEIR ALLEGIANCE. *EVERYONE* IS BEHIND YOU.

OPTIMUS...

...*I* SHALL NOT BE LEADING OUR PEOPLE.


BUT—
I AM TIRED. I NEED TO REST. AND... I AM A UNITER, NOT A LEADER. BUT YOU...
...YOU SEE HOW EASILY YOU DEFUSED THE SITUATION BETWEEN MEGATRON AND YOUR NEW FRIEND?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
I'M SAYING IT IS YOUR DESTINY TO LEAD THE AUTOBOTS...
...OPTIMUS PRIME.
PERHAPS SENTINEL WAS NOT THE LAST OF THE PRIMES.
PERHAPS.
BUT HE WAS, WITHOUT DOUBT, THE LAST GREAT TRANSFORMER.
I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME IF I TOLD YOU OF MY RESPECT FOR HIM, OPTIMUS. BUT IT IS THE TRUTH... AND, ANYWAY...

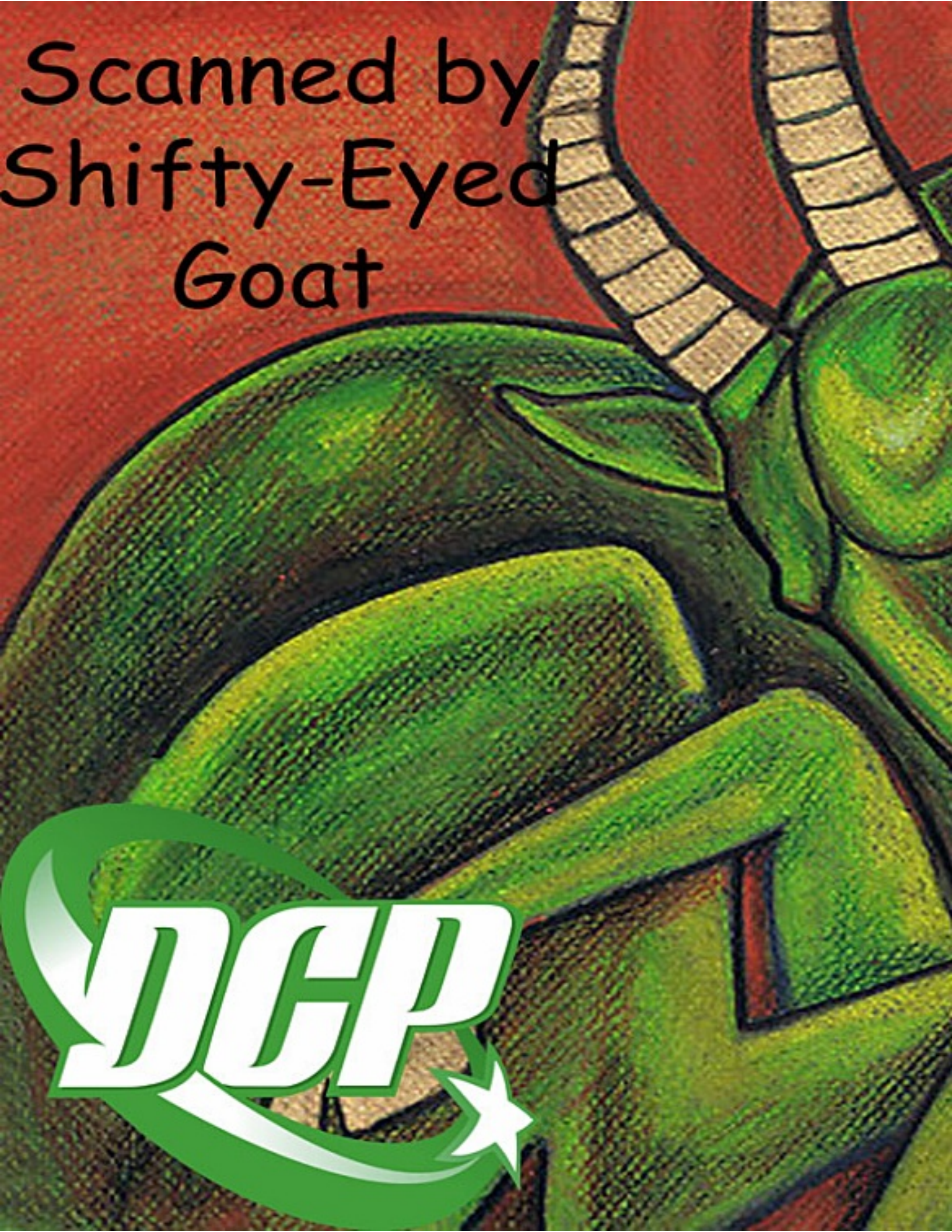
...I NO LONGER CARE WHETHER YOU BELIEVE ME OR NOT.
OPTIMUS!


BECAUSE ON THAT DAY, SO LONG AGO... THAT FIRST DAY...
OPTIMUS, STAND DOWN! PLEASE!
THIS ISN'T WHO YOU ARE!
...WHEN I HEARD WHAT YOU SAID TO SENTINEL, AS HE TOLD YOU OF YOUR DESTINY...
...I LEARNED SOMETHING ABOUT YOU, OPTIMUS. SOMETHING I HAD NEVER REALIZED BEFORE.
ELITA.
MEGATRON'S DEATH IS ALL THAT MATTERS.
AND NOW, THOUGH I KNOW THAT NOTHING WILL STAND IN YOUR WAY...
...AND I KNOW YOU ARE COMING TO KILL ME...
...REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES...

...I SEE IN YOUR EYES HOW *RIGHT* I WAS. THAT *FIRST DAY*.

YOU COULD *NEVER* HANDLE *RESPONSIBILITY*, BROTHER.
TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE: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Optimus Prime. Megatron.

Once, they were close friends—brothers-in-arms under the mentorship of Sentinel Prime, who (with their help) had united the warring tribes of Cybertron, and brought the planet itself into orbit around a star, thus providing the energy needed to fuel the life-giving Allspark and restore the world to glory.

But as the new sun set for the first time, Sentinel Prime told Optimus a secret... and that secret would change everything.

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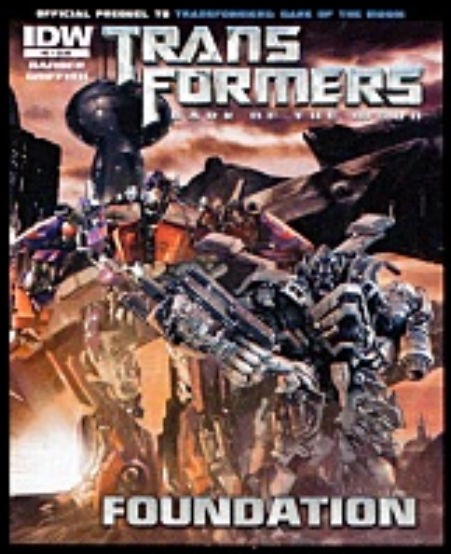

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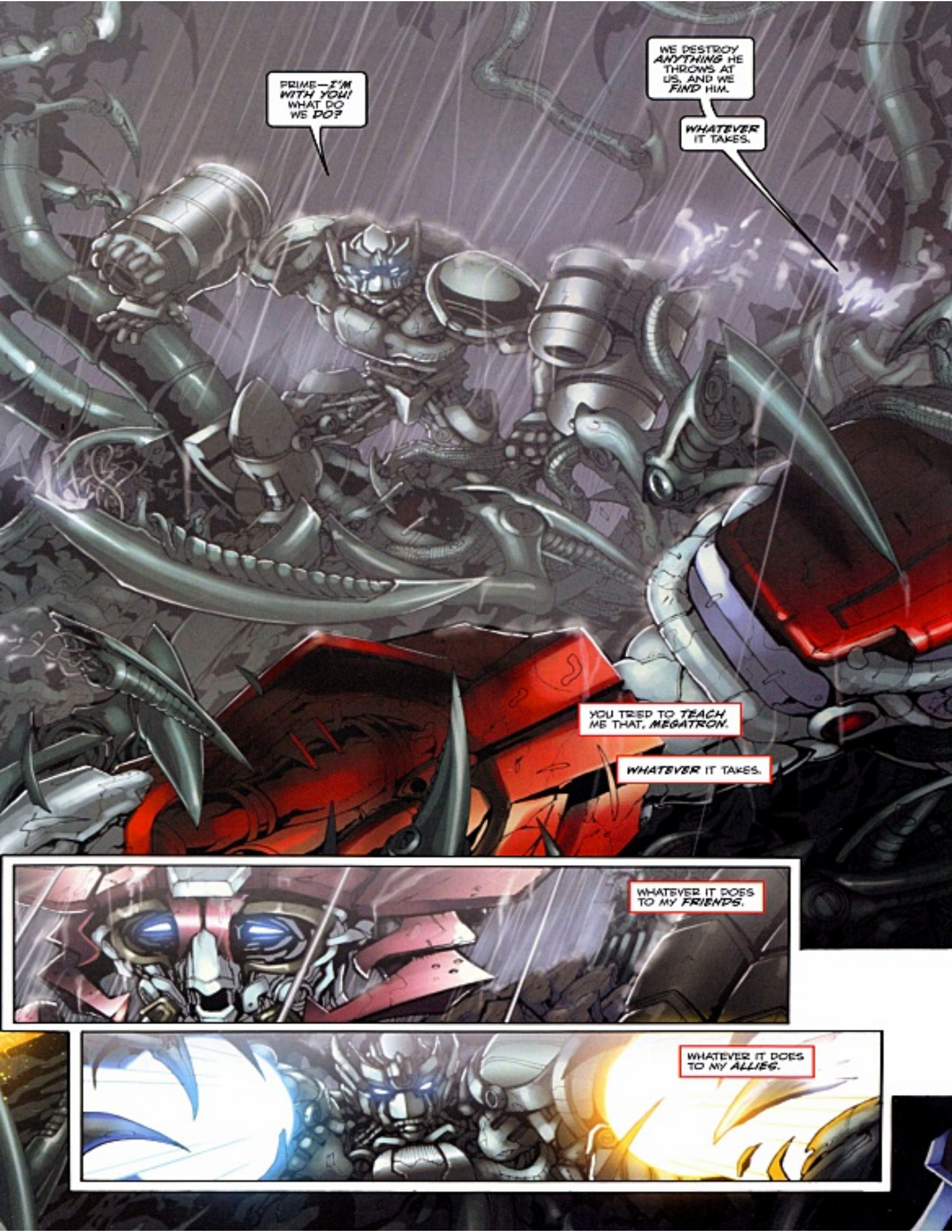
PRIME! COME BACK...
HE'LL NEVER MAKE IT ALONE.
LET HIM GO, IRONHIDE.

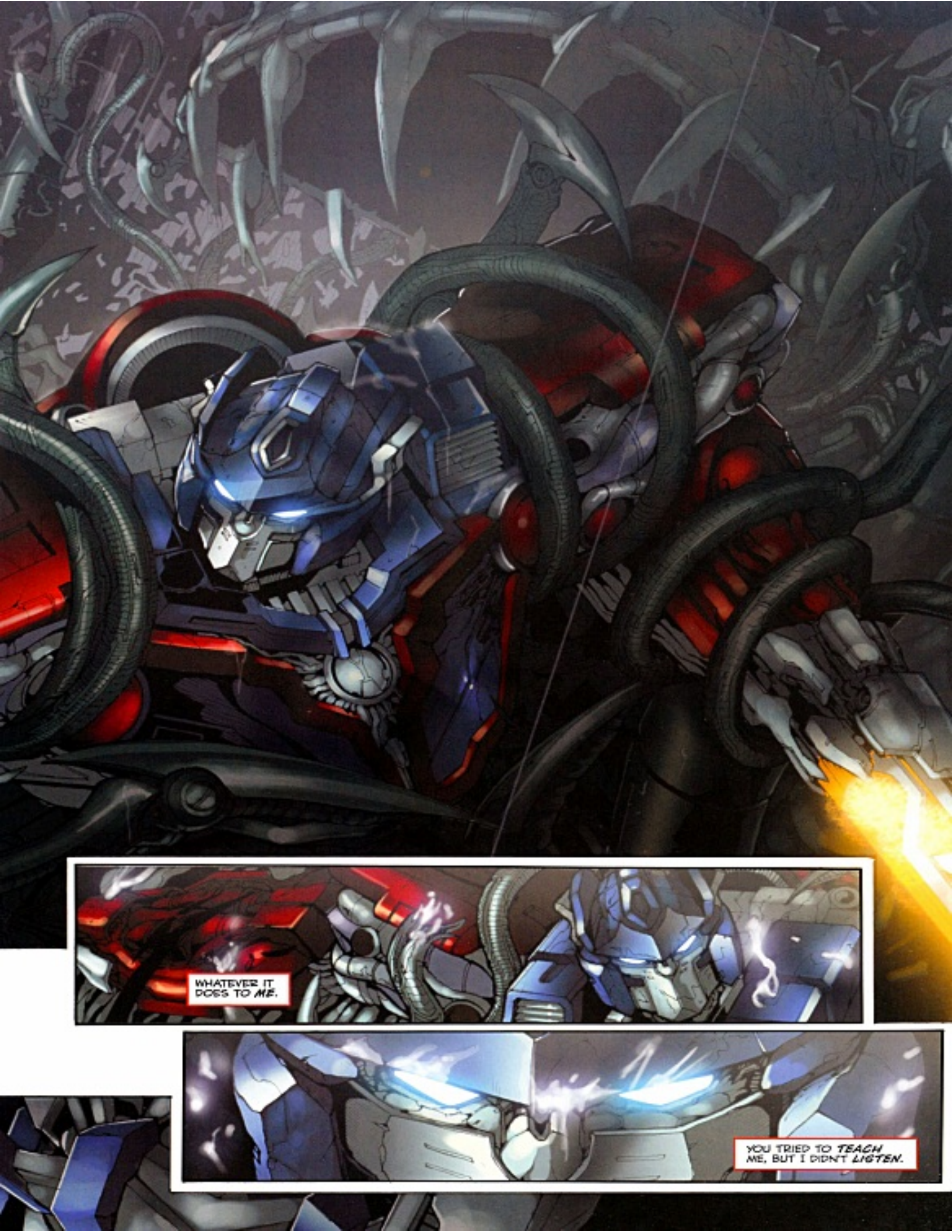
I KNOW.
YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW? LOOK.
ELITA...

DO YOU WANT TO WIND UP LIKE THIS? MEGATRON'S GOADING HIM, AND OPTIMUS IS FALLING FOR IT.
BUT I CAN'T...
...HE'S MY FRIEND.

HE'S MINE, TOO.
ELITA-ONE IS RIGHT.

THIS IS A ONE-WAY TRIP.
EVEN IF I SURVIVE, THERE'S NO COMING BACK.


PRIME—I'M WITH YOU! WHAT DO WE DO?
WE DESTROY ANYTHING HE THROWS AT US, AND WE FIND HIM.
WHATEVER IT TAKES.
YOU TRIED TO TEACH ME THAT, MEGATRON.
WHATEVER IT TAKES.
WHATEVER IT DOES TO MY FRIENDS.
WHATEVER IT DOES TO MY ALLIES.


WHATEVER IT DOES TO *ME*.
YOU TRIED TO *TEACH* ME, BUT I DIDN'T *LISTEN*.

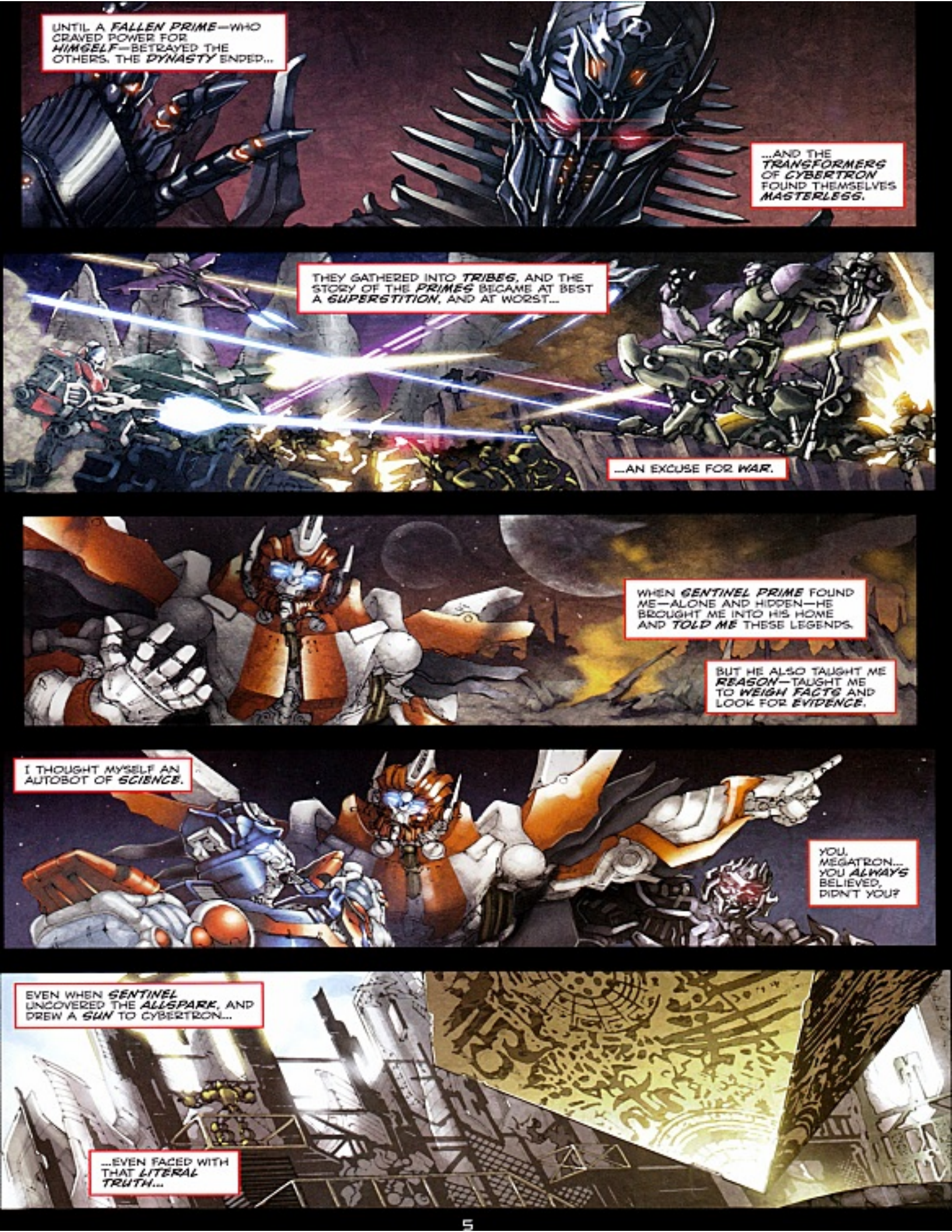
I DIDN'T *BELIEVE*.
PRIMUS. *THE FIRST CYBERTRONIAN?* OR JUST A *CREATION MYTH?*

I *KNEW* THE LEGEND OF THE *ALLSPARK*. WHEN THE CUBE CRASHED INTO CYBERTRON, IT GAVE THE *SPARK* OF LIFE TO PRIMUS, AND HIS DESCENDANTS...
...THE *PRIMES*.

THEN, THE STORIES GO, THE *ALLSPARK* PROVIDED THE PRIMES WITH A WORKFORCE OF *TRANSFORMERS*—LIFE FORMS CAPABLE OF *CHANGING* THEIR SHAPES.

THE *CUBE'S* APPETITE WAS *VORACIOUS*.
TO SATIATE IT, THE PRIMES *TELEPORTED* THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY, SEEKING OUT *STARS* FOR THE ALLSPARK TO *CONSUME*.

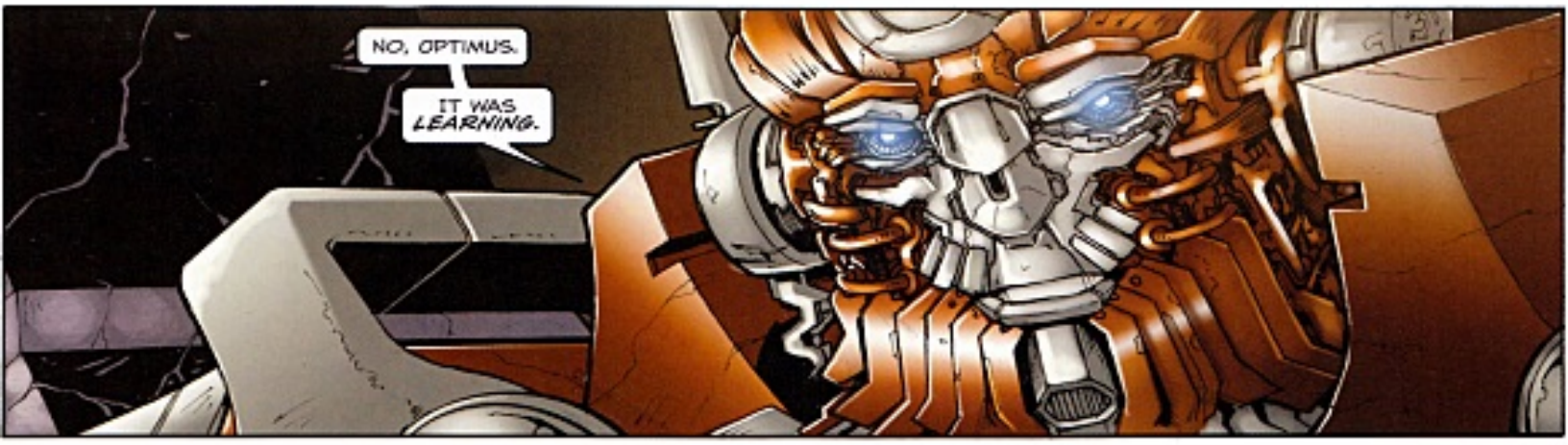
IN THEIR BENEVOLENCE, THE *DYNASTY OF PRIMES* SOUGHT ONLY UNINHABITED SYSTEMS, FOR THEY HAD DECREED THAT *NONE* WOULD *DIE* SO *CYBERTRON* MIGHT *LIVE*.
A *PERFECT WORLD*, IF ONE BELIEVES IN THAT KIND OF THING.


UNTIL A FALLEN PRIME—WHO CRAVED POWER FOR HIMSELF—BETRAYED THE OTHERS, THE DYNASTY ENDED...
...AND THE TRANSFORMERS OF CYBERTRON FOUND THEMSELVES MASTERLESS.
THEY GATHERED INTO TRIBES, AND THE STORY OF THE PRIMES BECAME AT BEST A SUPERSTITION, AND AT WORST...
...AN EXCUSE FOR WAR.
WHEN SENTINEL PRIME FOUND ME—ALONE AND HIDDEN—HE BROUGHT ME INTO HIS HOME AND TOLD ME THESE LEGENDS.
BUT HE ALSO TAUGHT ME REASON—TAUGHT ME TO WEIGH FACTS AND LOOK FOR EVIDENCE.
I THOUGHT MYSELF AN AUTOBOT OF SCIENCE.
YOU, MEGATRON... YOU ALWAYS BELIEVED, DIDN'T YOU?
EVEN WHEN SENTINEL UNCOVERED THE ALLSPARK, AND DREW A SUN TO CYBERTRON...
...EVEN FACED WITH THAT LITERAL TRUTH...

...WHY COULDN'T I BELIEVE?
OPTIMUS—I BELIEVE YOU TO BE OF MY LINEAGE. I BELIEVE YOU ARE A PRIME—
—AND IT IS YOUR DESTINY TO LEAD CYBERTRON.

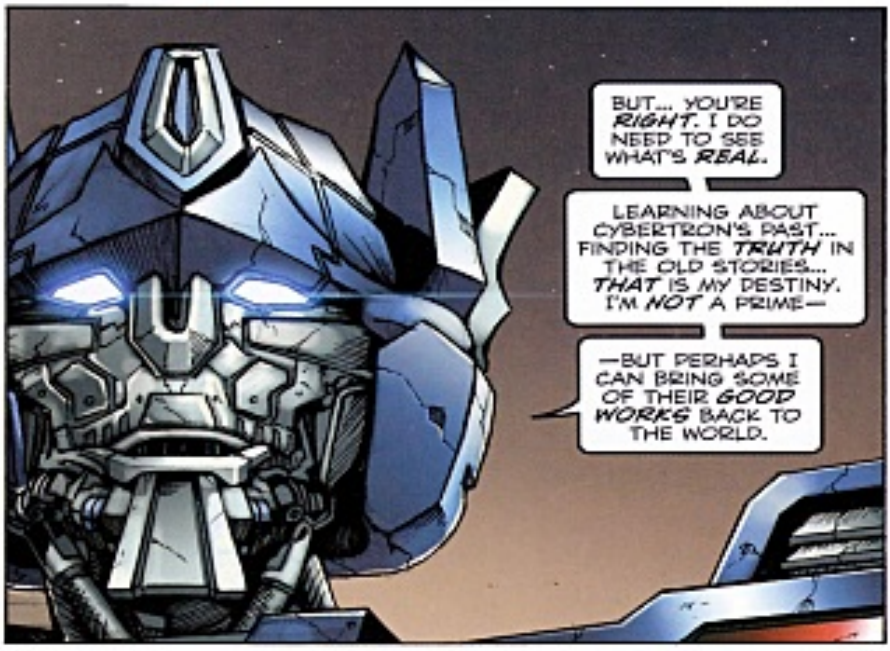
THE CITY OF THETACON.
SENTINEL, I JUST... AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH TO GET HERE... I JUST DON'T KNOW.
WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH MUCH.
ALL THE WAR, THE DEATH... DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT WAS?

IT WAS... TRANSFORMER KILLING TRANSFORMER.
IT WAS INSULTS FROM GENERATIONS PAST BECOMING TRIBAL BLOOD FEUDS. WE BECAME A PLANET OF KILLERS.
DO I KNOW WHAT IT WAS, SENTINEL? IT WAS EVIL.


NO, OPTIMUS.
IT WAS LEARNING.

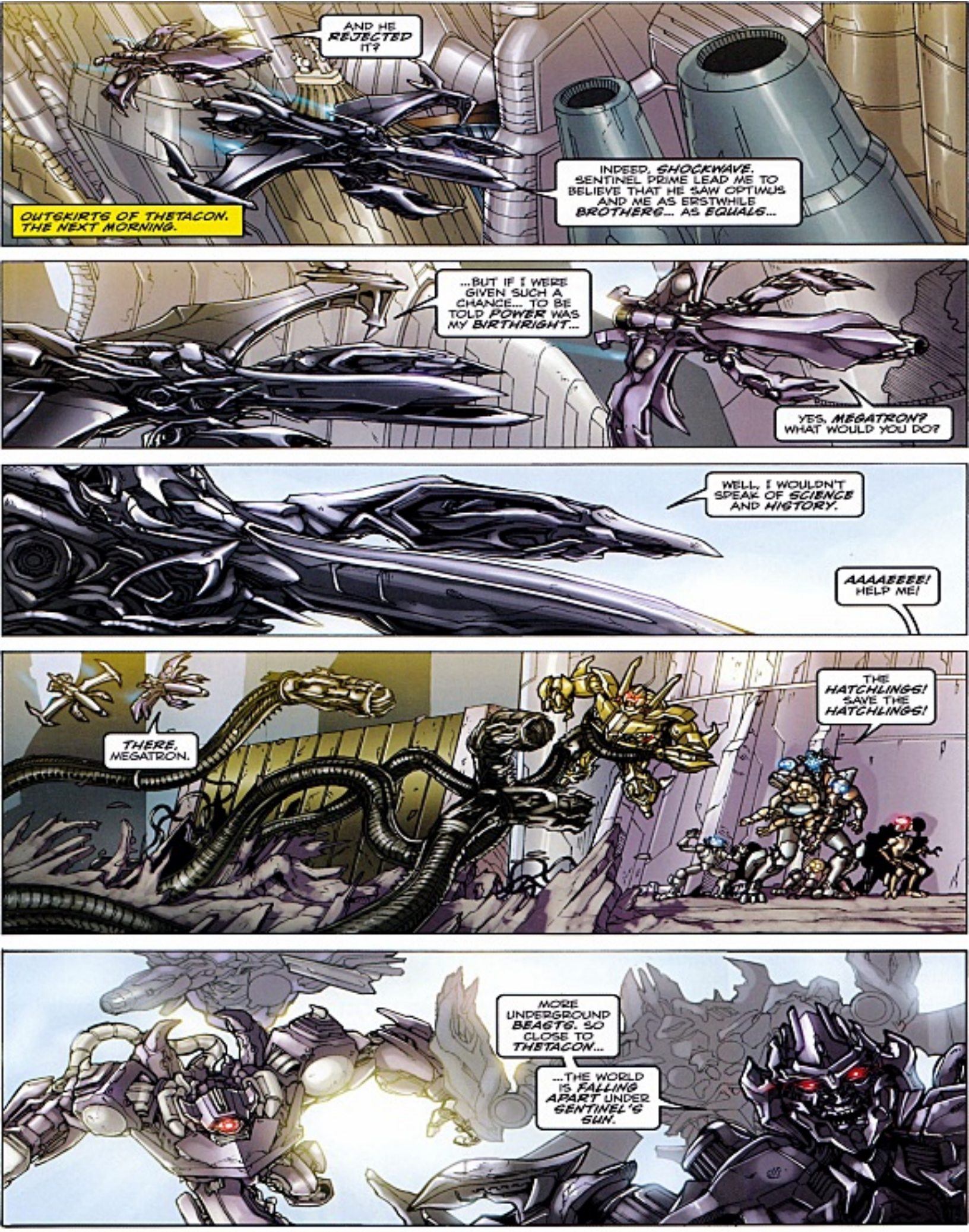
LOOK AT CYBERTRON NOW! I KNOW YOU; I KNOW YOU NEED SOMETHING TANGIBLE. WELL... GEE?
THE FUTURE IS BRIGHTER THAN THE PAST, OPTIMUS. AND IT IS YOURS TO LEAD US INTO.

SENTINEL, I... I CAN'T.
DESPITE WHAT YOU SAY... I KNOW IN MY SPARK, I AM NOT DIFFERENT FROM MY FRIENDS.


BUT... YOU'RE RIGHT. I DO NEED TO SEE WHAT'S REAL.
LEARNING ABOUT CYBERTRON'S PAST... FINDING THE TRUTH IN THE OLD STORIES... THAT IS MY DESTINY. I'M NOT A PRIME—
—BUT PERHAPS I CAN BRING SOME OF THEIR GOOD WORKS BACK TO THE WORLD.

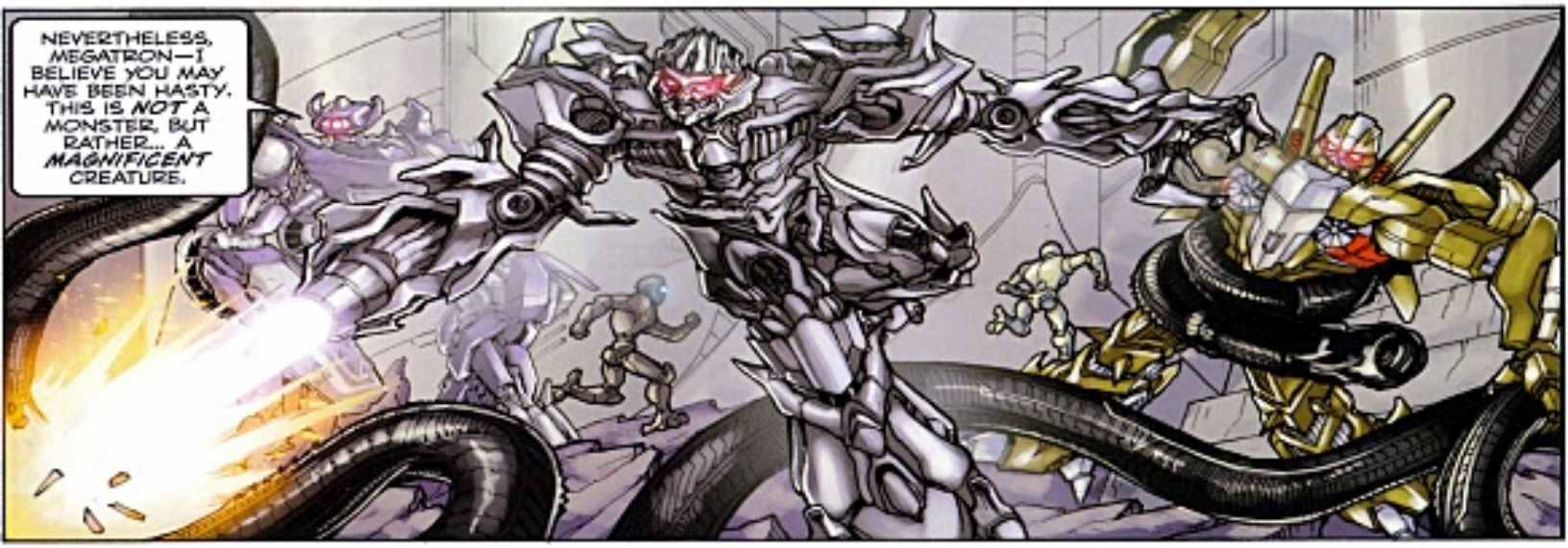
OPTIMUS, I WISH YOU COULD DECIDE OTHERWISE.
BUT PERHAPS ONE DAY, WHEN THEY SPEAK OF CYBERTRON, THEY'LL SPEAK OF SCIENCE AND HISTORY RATHER THAN WAR.
I'M MAKING THE RIGHT DECISION, SENTINEL. I'M NOT A WARRIOR...

...I'VE NEVER BEEN MORE SURE OF ANYTHING.

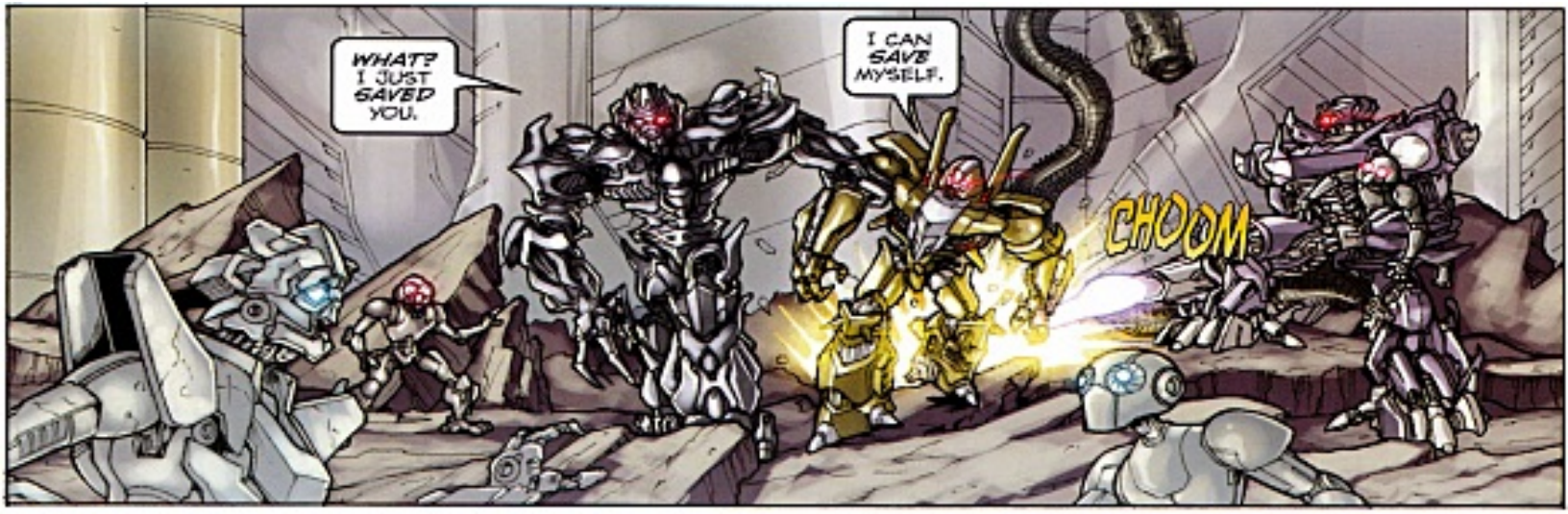

AND HE REJECTED IT?
OUTSKIRTS OF THETACON. THE NEXT MORNING.
INDEED, SHOCKWAVE. SENTINEL PRIME LEAD ME TO BELIEVE THAT HE SAW OPTIMUS AND ME AS ERSTWHILE BROTHERS... AS EQUALS...
...BUT IF I WERE GIVEN SUCH A CHANCE... TO BE TOLD POWER WAS MY BIRTHRIGHT...
YES, MEGATRON? WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
WELL, I WOULDN'T SPEAK OF SCIENCE AND HISTORY.
AAAABBBB! HELP ME!
THERE, MEGATRON.
THE HATCHLINGS! SAVE THE HATCHLINGS!
MORE UNDERGROUND BEASTS. SO CLOSE TO THETACON...
...THE WORLD IS FALLING APART UNDER SENTINEL'S SUN.

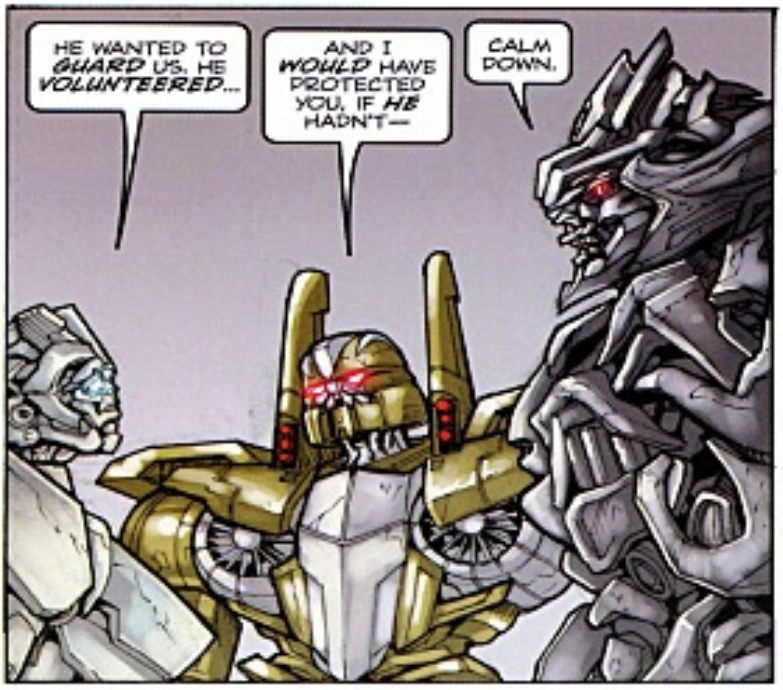
QUICKLY—GET AWAY FROM THAT MONSTER!
THANK PRIMUS YOU'RE HERE—IT HAS THE HATCHLINGS! WE WERE ON AN EDUCATIONAL TRIP—

IT DOESN'T MATTER. AND...
CHOOM
...IT HAD THE HATCHLINGS.


NEVERTHELESS, MEGATRON—I BELIEVE YOU MAY HAVE BEEN HASTY. THIS IS NOT A MONSTER, BUT RATHER... A MAGNIFICENT CREATURE.

SPARE ME YOUR ADMIRATION, AND KEEP SHOOTING IT!
DON'T TOUCH ME...


WHAT? I JUST SAVED YOU.
I CAN SAVE MYSELF.
CHOOM


HE WANTED TO GUARD US. HE VOLUNTEERED...
AND I WOULD HAVE PROTECTED YOU, IF HE HADN'T—
CALM DOWN.

MY. BUT YOU'RE A FEISTY ONE. I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK THE PLANET BELONGED TO THOSE WHO RHYME WORDS AND SING MELODIES.
WHAT DO THEY CALL YOU?

I AM STARSCREAM.

STARSCREAM! GOOD—AN HONEST NAME FOR A WARRIOR. THERE IS HOPE FOR OUR WORLD, AFTER ALL.
THE BEASTS HAVE VANISHED, MEGATRON, BUT THERE MAY BE MORE.

NO MATTER. STARSCREAM, IT IS UP TO OUR KIND TO SAVE CYBERTRON...
...FROM ITSELF, IF NEED BE.

THREE SOLAR CYCLES LATER, *TRYPTICON* WAS DECLARED THE NEW *CAPITOL* OF THE WORLD. *SENTINEL PRIME* ISSUED AN *INVITATION* TO ALL CYBERTRONIANS.

IT WAS *UNIFICATION DAY.*

TRANSFORMERS OF UNITED CYBERTRON!

YOU PLACED YOUR *FAITH* IN ME DURING OUR *ETERNAL NIGHT.* WELL, *DAY* HAS *DAWNED.* WAR IS *OVER.*

BUT EVEN IN THIS NEW *AGE* OF *FREEDOM,* THERE LIE *DANGERS.* OUR WORLD IS NEITHER *TAME* NOR *SAFE.*

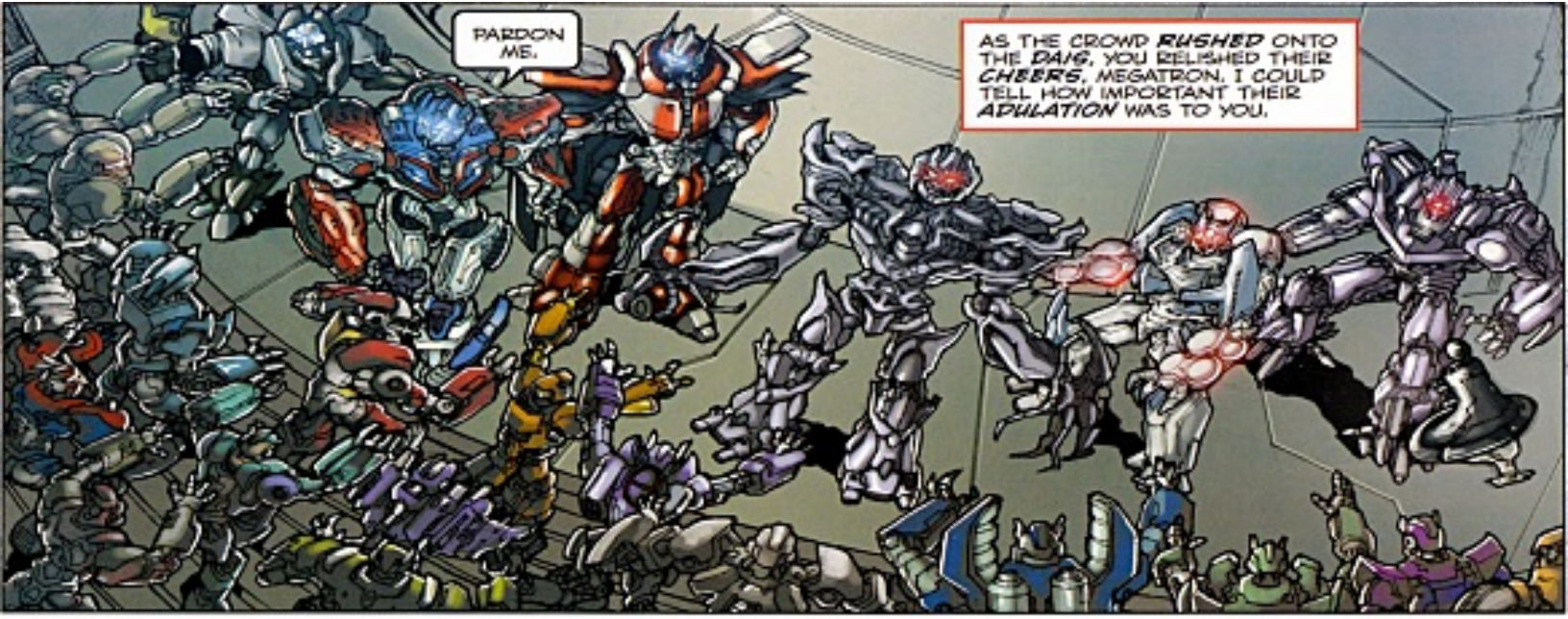
THE LESSONS OF *HISTORY* TELL US TO PREPARE FOR *ANY* EVENTUALITY.

TO THIS END: CYBERTRON SHALL BE RULED BY TWO *SEPARATE BODIES,* WORKING FOR A *COMMON GOAL.*

THE *AUTOBOT SCIENCE DIVISION,* LEAD BY THE RESOURCEFUL *OPTIMUS,* WILL EXCAVATE OUR *PAST* AND IMPROVE LIFE IN OUR *PRESENT.*

MEANWHILE, THE *CYBERTRONIAN DEFENSE FORCE,* COMMANDED BY THE VALIANT *MEGATRON,* IS CHARGED WITH PROTECTING OUR *FUTURE.*

TOGETHER, *ALL ARE ONE!*


PARDON ME.
AS THE CROWD RUSHED ONTO THE DAIS, YOU RELISHED THEIR CHEERS, MEGATRON. I COULD TELL HOW IMPORTANT THEIR ADULATION WAS TO YOU.

I SAW YOU FROM THE STAGE, ELITA! I THOUGHT YOU'D GONE TO METROTITAN!
MY SISTERS WOULD HAVE KILLED ME IF WE MISSED SENTINEL'S SPEECH.
THESE MUST BE THEM. I'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU.

I'M CHROMIA. WHO ARE YOU?
THE ONE WHO ISN'T RUDE IS ARCEE.
HI.

YOU'RE GOING TO BE DIGGING UP THE GROUND, AREN'T YOU? LOOKING FOR THE PRIMES?
LOOKING FOR THEIR ARTIFACTS, IF THERE ARE ANY.

I'D LIKE TO HELP.
WELL, I CAN USE ALL THE HELP I CAN GET.
REALLY, ARCEE? I THOUGHT YOU'D JOIN THE DEFENSE FORCES, LIKE CHROMIA.

PERHAPS THE TIME HAS COME FOR ALL OF US TO LEAVE THE FIGHTING TO THE WARRIORS.

WE WATCHED CYBERTRON *GROW*, MEGATRON, YOU, PROTECTING THE *SKIES*... WHILE I HAD MY HEAD BURIED IN THE *COLD METAL GROUND*.

WE WATCHED OUR FELLOW TRANSFORMERS FIND THEIR PLACE IN A *UTOPIA*...

...BUT *SOME* SPOKE OUT *AGAINST* OUR NEW ORDER.

WERE THEY *REALLY* DANGEROUS? OR WERE THEY JUST *IN YOUR WAY?*

TYGER PAX.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY STUCK ME WITH *RAW RECRUITS*.

PLEASE. YOU KNOW I'M HERE AT THE DIRECT REQUEST OF *HIGH PROTECTOR MEGATRON*, HIMSELF.

THAT DOESN'T GIVE YOU *EXPERIENCE*, STARSCREAM.

C'MON, IRONHIDE. JUST 'CAUSE *YOU'RE* AN *OLD MAN*...

QUIET, CHROMIA. I CAN SEE THE *MALCONTENTS*. YOUR INTELLIGENCE WAS *RIGHT*, SOUNDWAVE.

MY INFORMATION IS *ALWAYS* CORRECT.

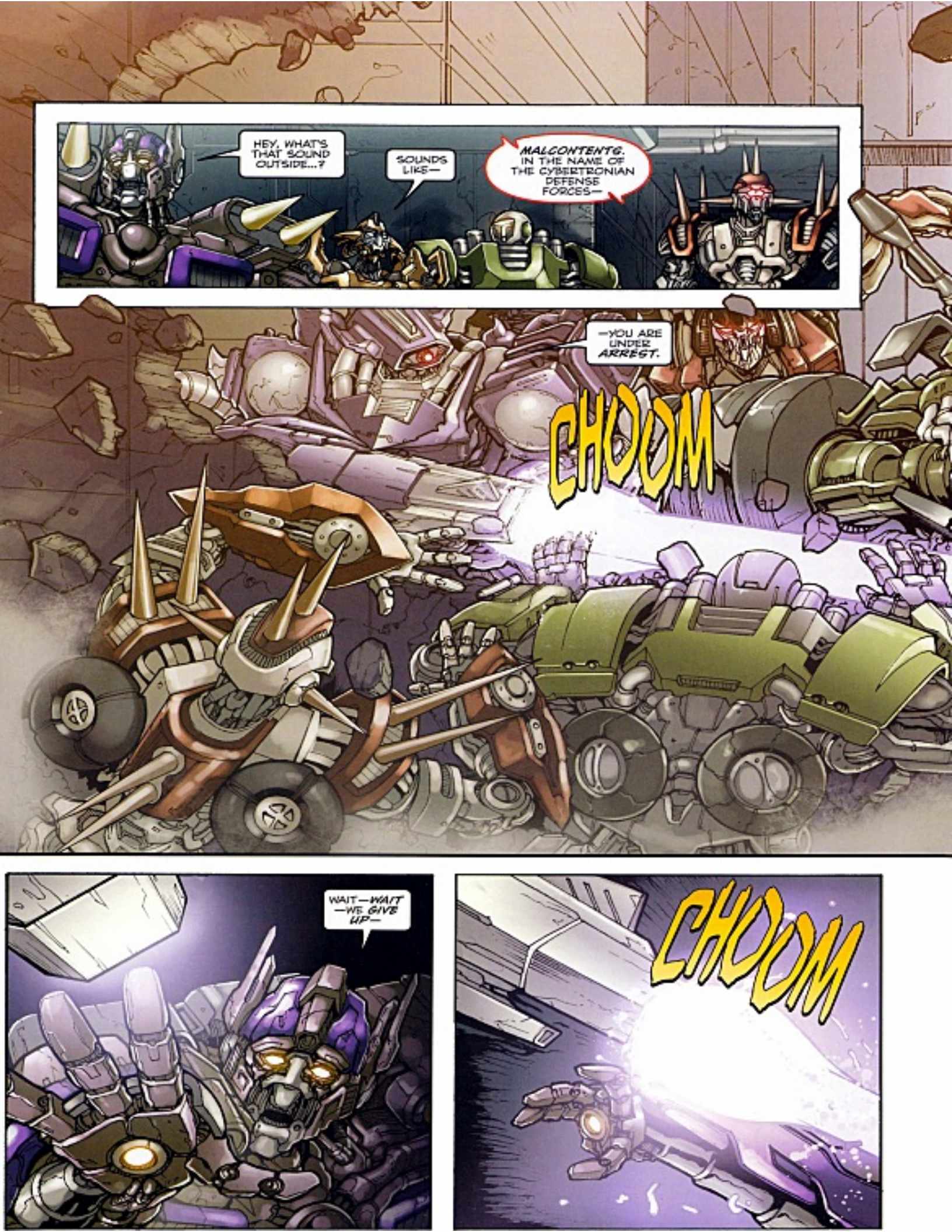
I WONDER WHAT THEY *WANT*...

THEY ARE *HEAVILY ARMED* AND READY TO *KILL*.

THEY ARE A *DANGER*, AND THEIR *GRIEVANCES* ARE *NOT* OUR CONCERN. *DEFENCE* IS OUR CONCERN.

SHOCKWAVE— *EXECUTE*.

MY *SPECIALTY*, MEGATRON


HEY, WHAT'S THAT SOUND OUTSIDE...?
SOUNDS LIKE—
MALCONTENTS. IN THE NAME OF THE CYBERTRONIAN DEFENSE FORCES—
—YOU ARE UNDER ARREST.
CHOOM
WAIT—WAIT—WE GIVE UP—
CHOOM

KA-THOOM

NOW, THERE'S GIVIN' UP AN' THEN THERE'S *GIVIN' UP*...
URK—!

SHOCKWAVE— THAT ONE'S *ESCAPING!*

HELP—HELP!

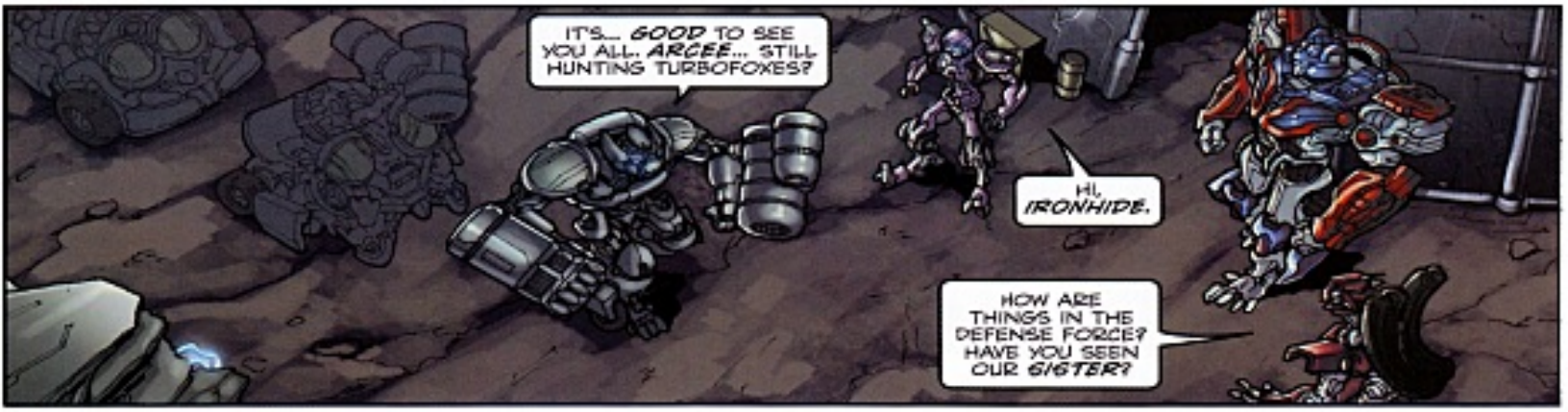
DON'T MOVE!
SURRENDER!

COWARDS.
BZZAK

I DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE. HE WAS GOING TO KILL US, MEGATRON.
IT DOESN'T MATTER, STARSCREAM. WE DIDN'T NEED ANY SURVIVORS, BUT THIS REMINDS ME...

...I DO NEED TO HAVE A WORD WITH OPTIMUS.

OPTIMUS!
IRONHIDE, OLD FRIEND! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN A QUARTEX!


IT'S... GOOD TO SEE YOU ALL. ARCEE... STILL HUNTING TURBOFOXES?
HI, IRONHIDE.
HOW ARE THINGS IN THE DEFENSE FORCE? HAVE YOU SEEN OUR SISTER?

OF COURSE. CHROMIA IS AS BRAVE A WARRIOR AS YOU, ELITA.
MY DAYS AS A WARRIOR ARE OVER, IRONHIDE.

YOU LOOK TROUBLED.
I FEEL LIKE I SHOULD BE LOOKING OVER MY SHOULDER WHEN I TALK TO YOU.

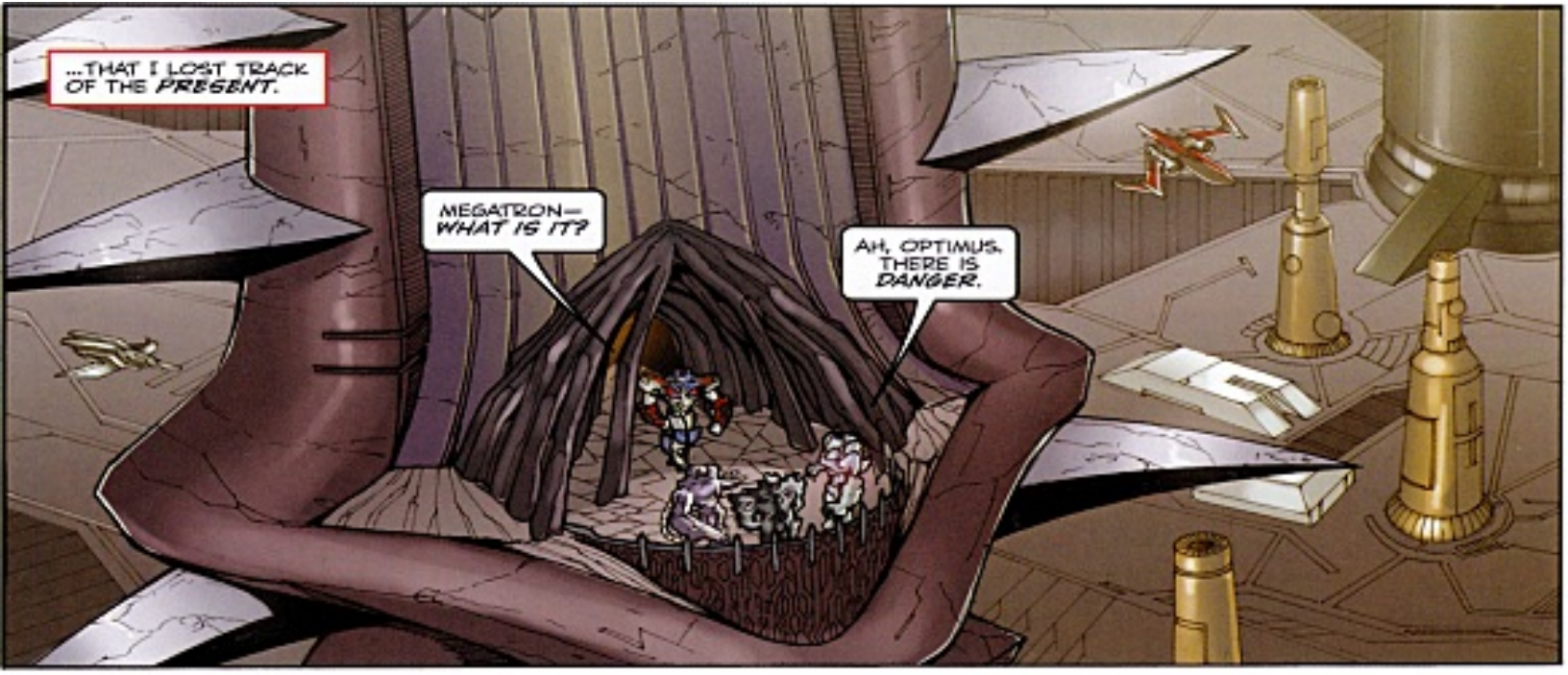
MEGATRON DOESN'T APPROVE OF MIXING ARCHAEOLOGY WITH POLICE WORK?
NEVER MIND THAT, IRONHIDE! COME SEE WHAT OPTIMUS FOUND.

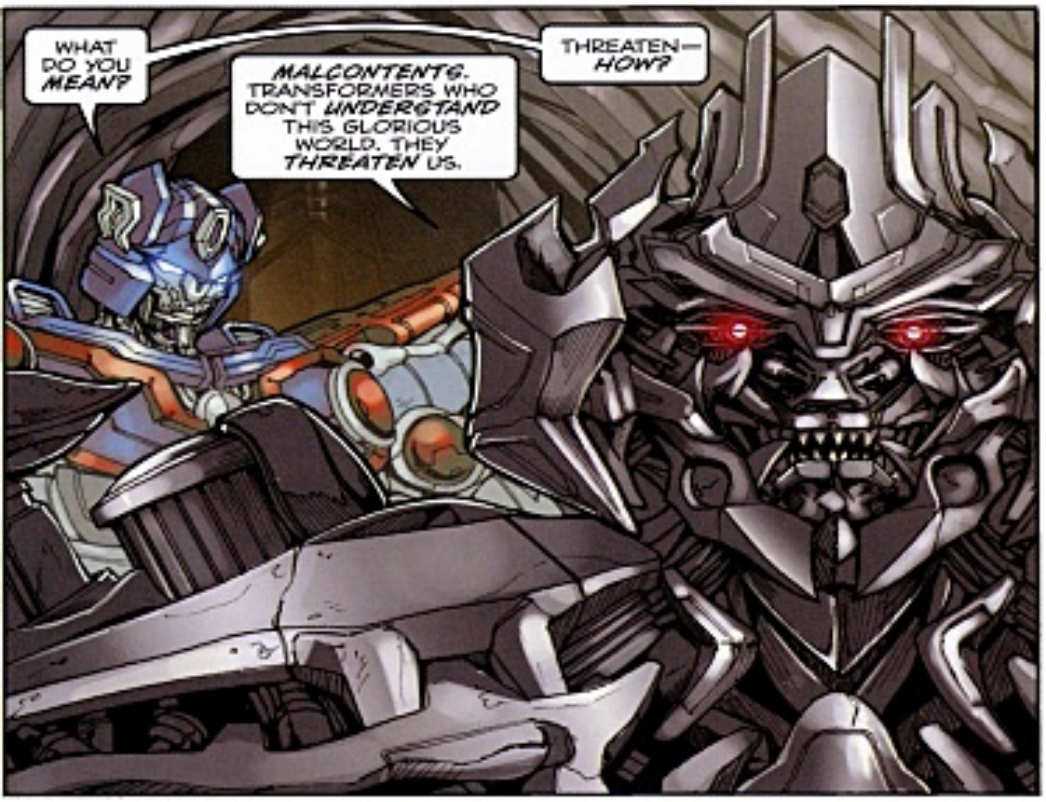
WHAT IS IT?
NO ONE KNOWS, NOT EVEN SENTINEL CAN OFFER A CLUE. BUT THE AGE, THE LOCATION, SO CLOSE TO THE ALLSPARK...
...I THINK IT MAY BE FROM THE DYNASTY OF PRIMES.

OPTIMUS! FIRST YOUR SCIENCE MAKES MY TRIBE GIVE UP ALL ITS FOOLISH OLD BELIEFS...

AND NOW I'M TELLING YOU THEY MIGHT BE TRUE, AFTER ALL. IT'S A FUNNY WORLD, IRONHIDE.
WHAT DID YOU NEED MY HELP FOR?

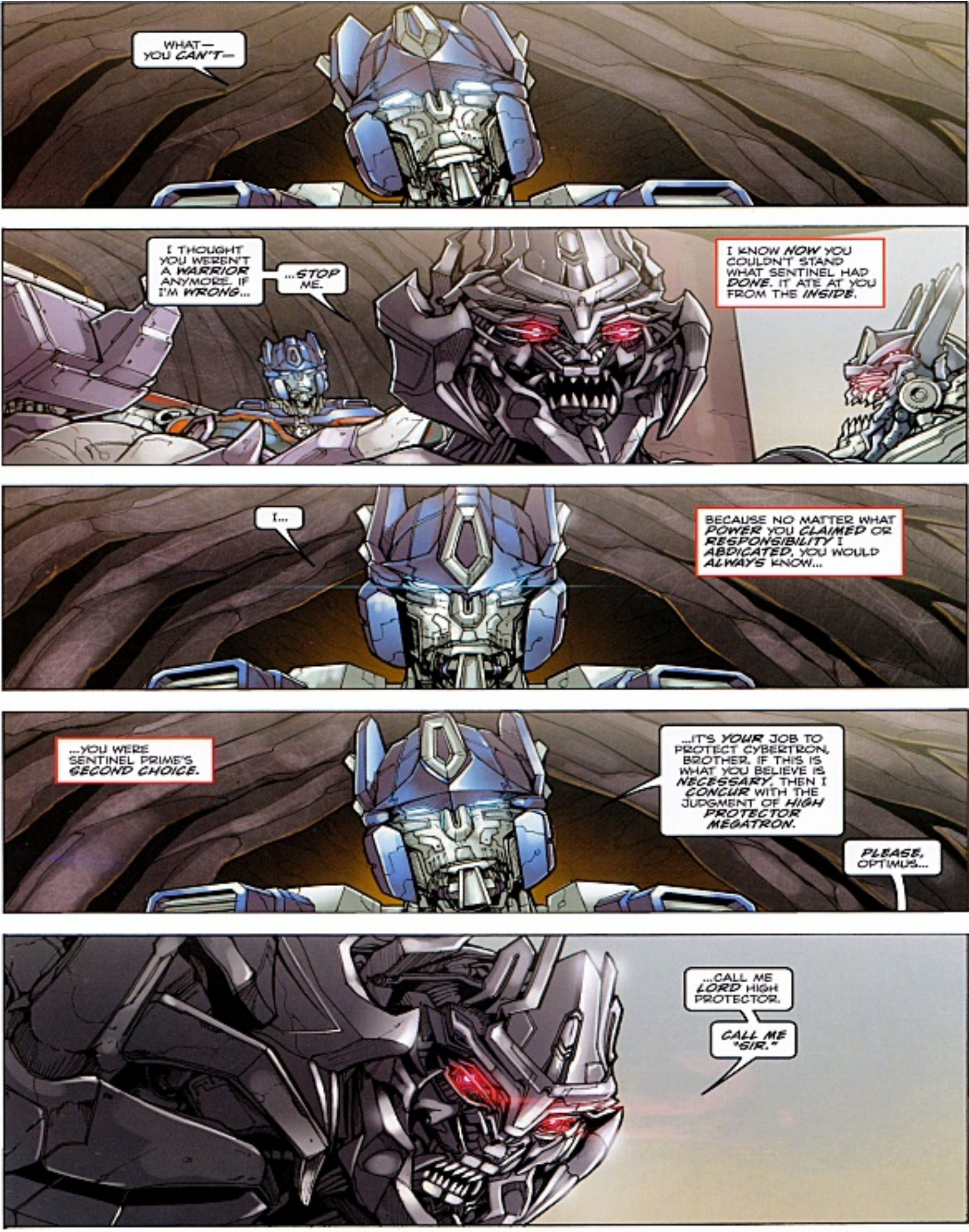
MEGATRON. HE... HE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU.
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN NOT TO DIG MYSELF SO FAR INTO THE PAST...


...THAT I LOST TRACK OF THE PRESENT.
MEGATRON— WHAT IS IT?
AH, OPTIMUS. THERE IS DANGER.


WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
MALCONTENTS. TRANSFORMERS WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS GLORIOUS WORLD. THEY THREATEN US.
THREATEN— HOW?

GRAVELY.

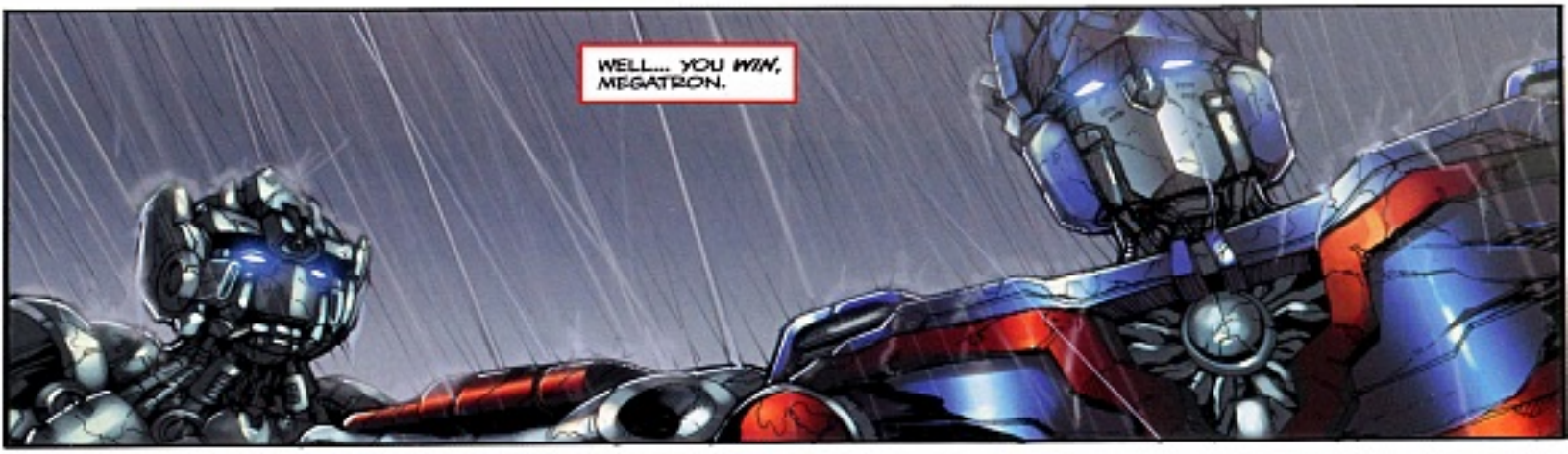
I'M AFRAID THIS MEANS THAT THE DEFENSE FORCE NEEDS TO ASSUME SUPREMACY.
IT WILL NOT AFFECT YOU OR YOUR WORK, OPTIMUS. JUST KEEP ME INFORMED OF WHAT YOU DIG UP.
MEANWHILE, I SHALL PROTECT OUR PEOPLE, BY DOING WHATEVER IS NECESSARY.

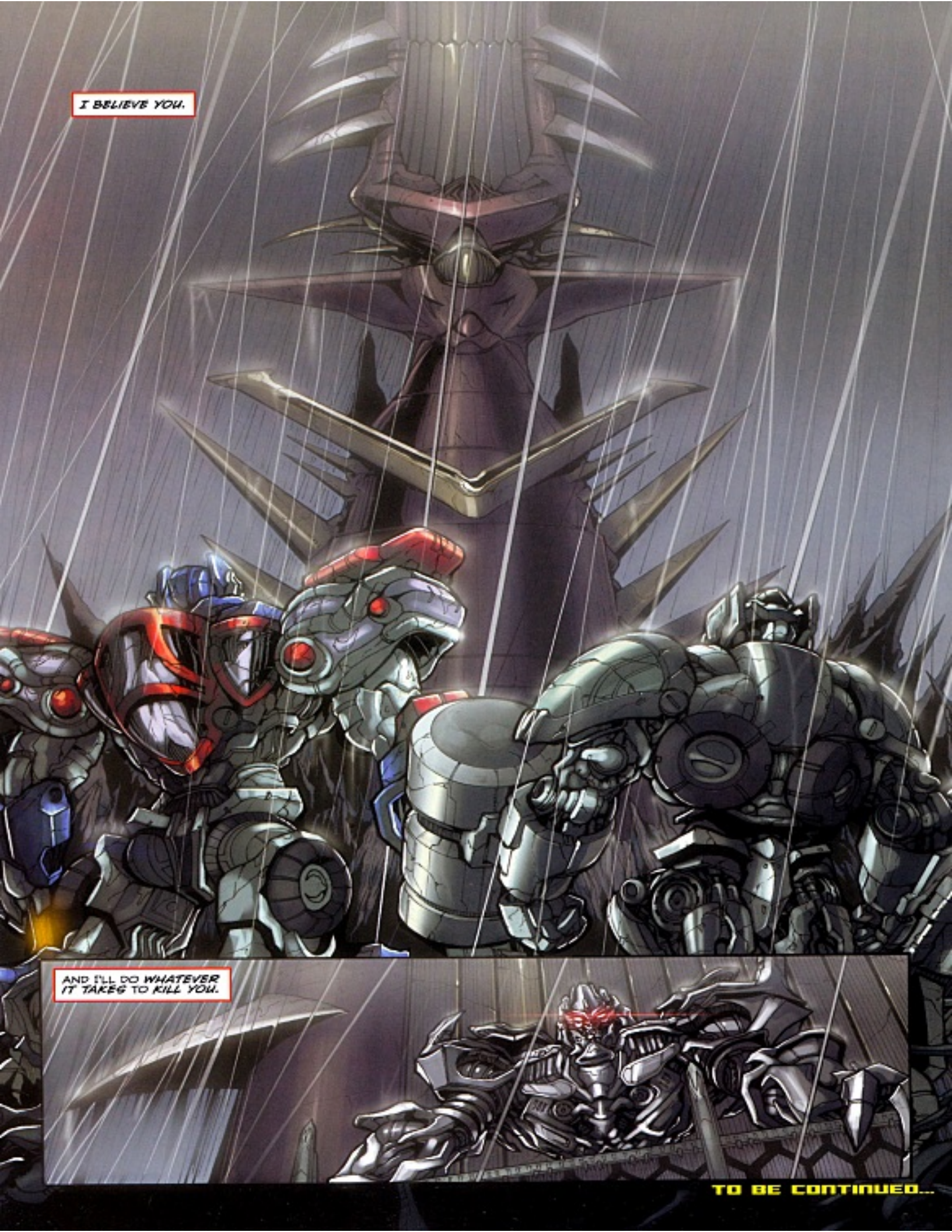

WHAT— YOU CAN'T—
I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T A WARRIOR ANYMORE. IF I'M WRONG...
...STOP ME.
I KNOW NOW YOU COULDN'T STAND WHAT SENTINEL HAD DONE. IT ATE AT YOU FROM THE INSIDE.
I...
BECAUSE NO MATTER WHAT POWER YOU CLAIMED OR RESPONSIBILITY I ABDICATED, YOU WOULD ALWAYS KNOW...
...YOU WERE SENTINEL PRIME'S SECOND CHOICE.
...IT'S YOUR JOB TO PROTECT CYBERTRON, BROTHER. IF THIS IS WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS NECESSARY, THEN I CONCUR WITH THE JUDGMENT OF HIGH PROTECTOR MEGATRON.
PLEASE, OPTIMUS...
...CALL ME LORD HIGH PROTECTOR.
CALL ME "SIR."

DID *POWER* CORRUPT YOU BACK THEN, MY BROTHER?

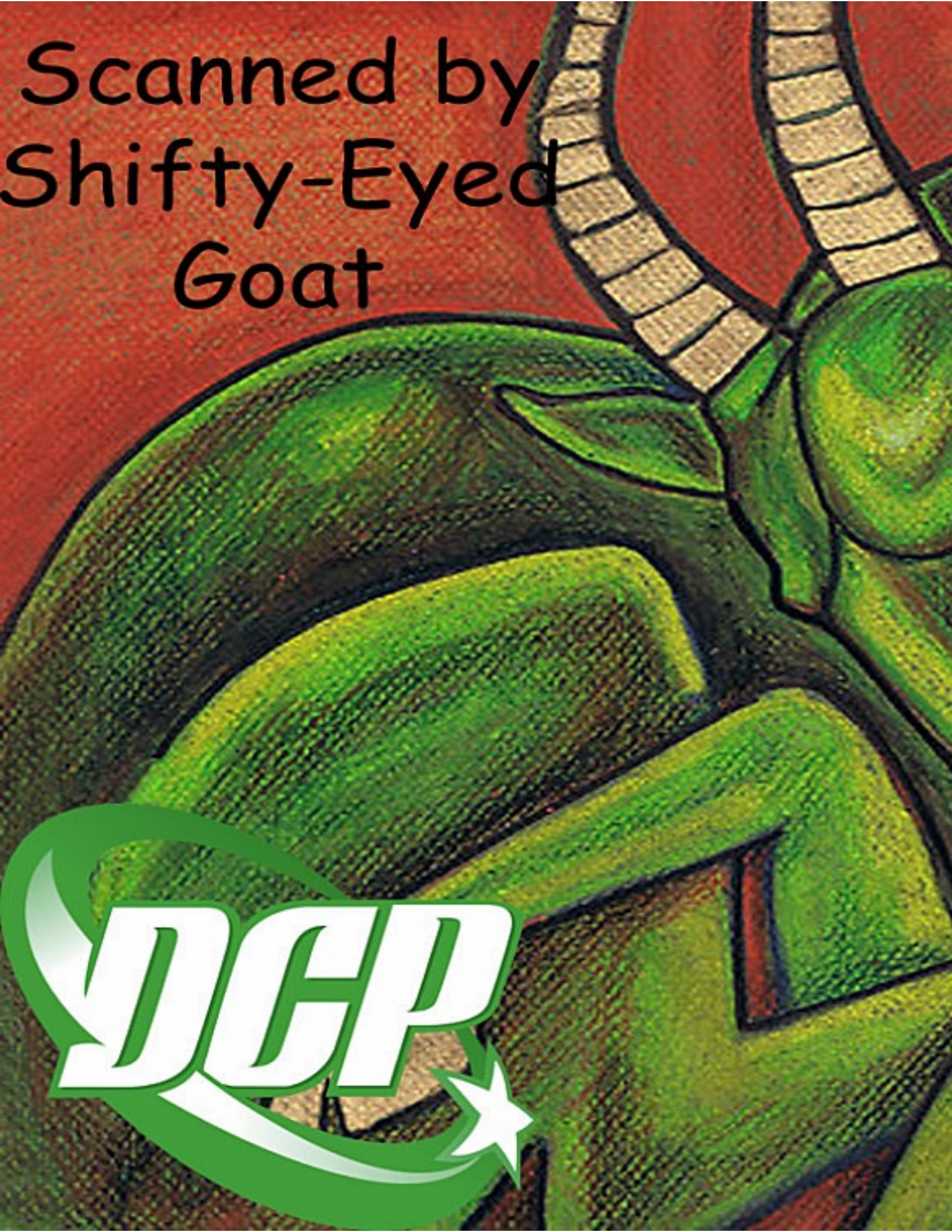
OR WERE YOU JUST TRYING TO MAKE ME A *BELIEVER*?

YOU WANTED TO CONVINCE ME *YOURS* WAS THE *WAY* OF THE *FUTURE*.


WELL... YOU *WIN*, MEGATRON.


I BELIEVE YOU.
AND I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO KILL YOU.
TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE:
BATTLECRY!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Eons ago, on the distant planet of Cybertron... with his ally Ironhide following, Optimus Prime traverses a rugged landscape with one goal in mind: to kill Megatron.

But what led to this? Once, they were close friends—brothers-in-arms under the mentorship of Sentinel Prime. Optimus was told that he was descended from the Primes—the first race of Cybertronians.

Optimus rejected his heritage, instead becoming a scientist with his friend Elita-One and her sister, Arcee, at his side. Elita's other sister, Chromia, joined their friend Ironhide in the Defense Forces, serving under the newly-appointed High Protector Megatron, his lieutenant Shockwave, and the upstart Starscream.

Soon, this position proved too small for Megatron's ambitions...

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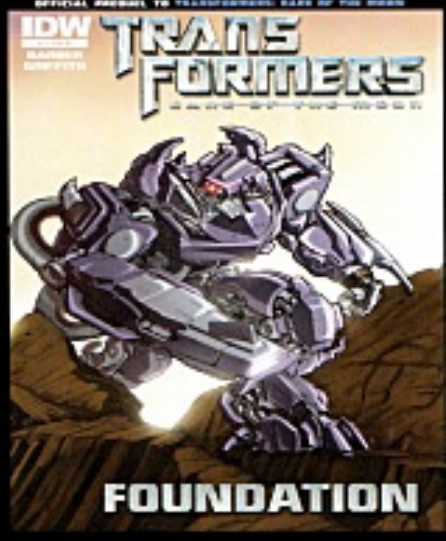

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Special thanks to Hasbro's Aaron Archer, Michael Kelly, Amie Lozanski, Val Roca, Ed Lane, Michael Provost, Erin Hillman, Samantha Lomow, and Michael Verrecchia for their invaluable assistance.

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YOU FACED MY SOLDIERS AND SURVIVED...
HE'LL BE WAITING FOR US—IT WON'T BE EASY TO GET IN THERE.
GETTING IN IS GOING TO BE THE LEAST OF OUR PROBLEMS.

...YOU CUT YOUR WAY THROUGH THE BARBED JUNGLE...
IRONHIDE—I MEAN THIS: GO BACK TO BASE WITH ELITA-ONE. THIS IS MY BATTLE.

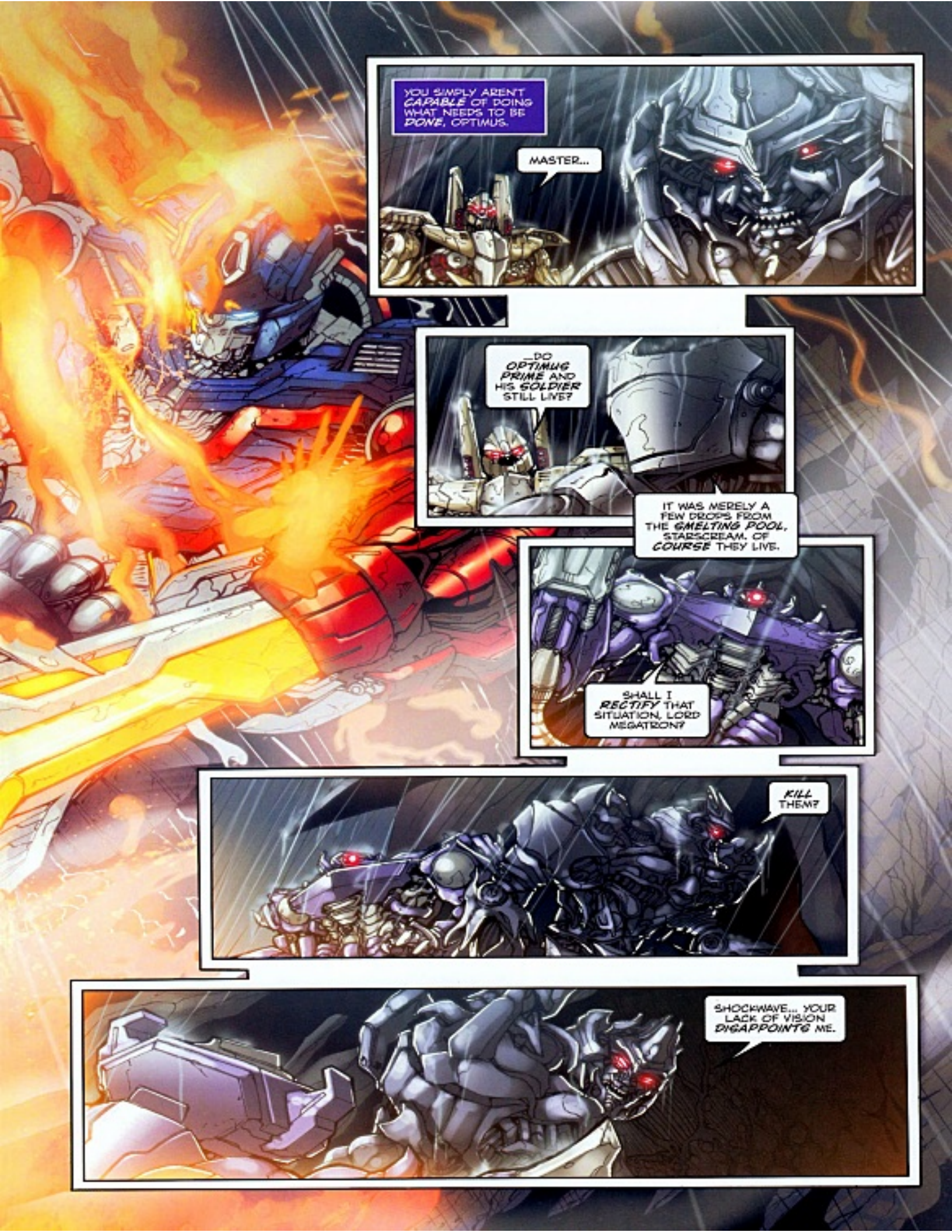
...BUT ALL OF IT WAS CHILD'S PLAY.
WHERE YOU GO, I GO, PRIME.
DON'T LET OUR FRIENDSHIP BLIND YOU TO WHAT I'M DOING.

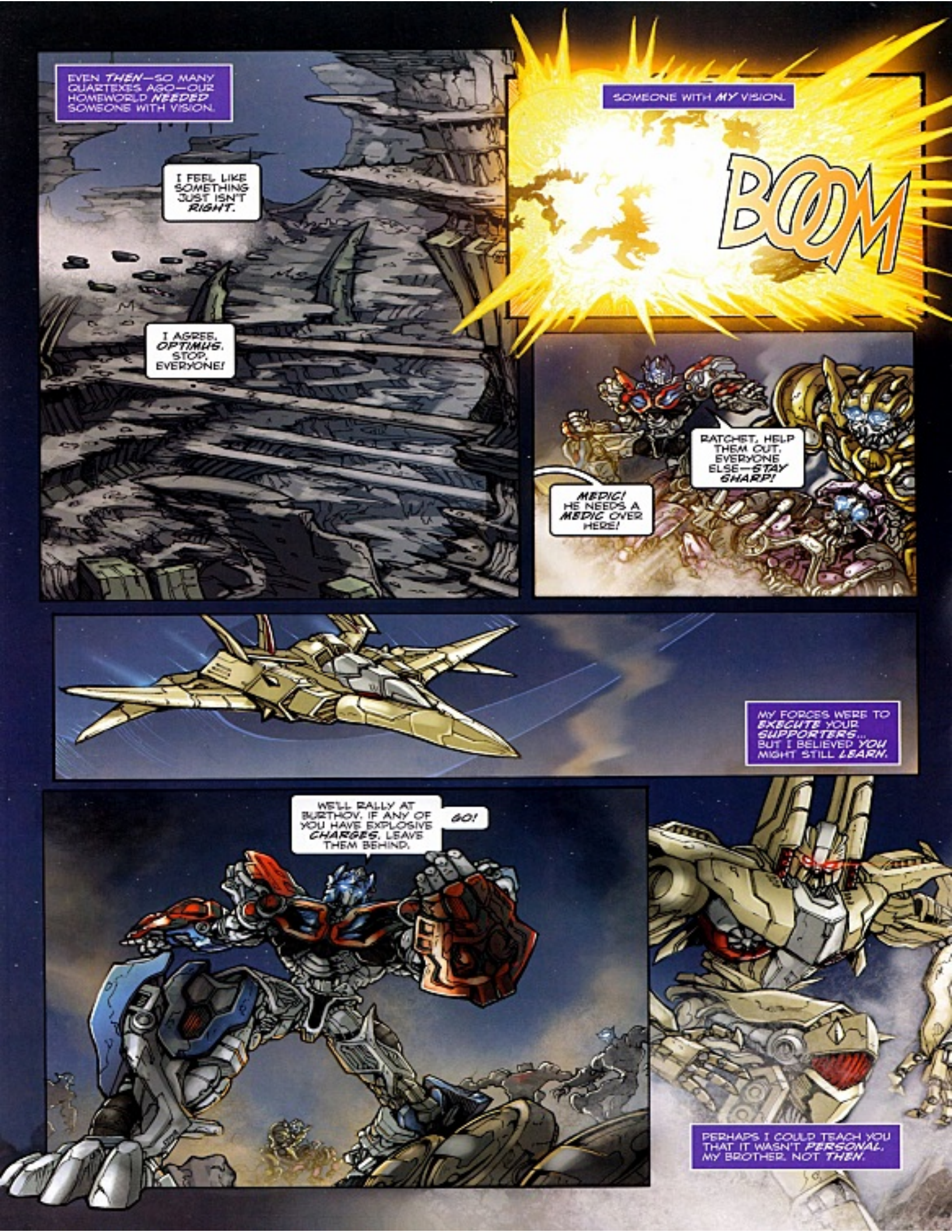
MEGATRON!
FACE ME AND MEET YOUR FATE!

THIS ISN'T ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH.
COME IN OUT OF THE RAIN, OPTIMUS—I'M TOLD IT ISN'T GOOD FOR YOU.

I'M TOLD IT BURNS.
THIS IS ABOUT WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A SAVIOR.

SOMETHING YOU COULD NEVER BE.
PRIME!


YOU SIMPLY AREN'T CAPABLE OF DOING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE, OPTIMUS.
MASTER...
...DO OPTIMUS PRIME AND HIS SOLDIER STILL LIVE?
IT WAS MERELY A FEW DROPS FROM THE SMELTING POOL, STARSCREAM. OF COURSE THEY LIVE.
SHALL I RECTIFY THAT SITUATION, LORD MEGATRON?
KILL THEM?
SHOCKWAVE... YOUR LACK OF VISION DISAPPOINTS ME.


EVEN THEN—SO MANY QUARTEXES AGO—OUR HOMEWORLD NEEDED SOMEONE WITH VISION.
I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING JUST ISN'T RIGHT.
I AGREE, OPTIMUS. STOP, EVERYONE!
SOMEONE WITH MY VISION.
BOOM
RATCHET, HELP THEM OUT. EVERYONE ELSE—STAY SHARP!
MEDIC! HE NEEDS A MEDIC OVER HERE!
MY FORCES WERE TO EXECUTE YOUR SUPPORTERS... BUT I BELIEVED YOU MIGHT STILL LEARN.
WE'LL RALLY AT BURTHOV. IF ANY OF YOU HAVE EXPLOSIVE CHARGES, LEAVE THEM BEHIND.
GO!
PERHAPS I COULD TEACH YOU THAT IT WASN'T PERSONAL, MY BROTHER. NOT THEN.

YOU'RE MAD, STARSCREAM!
KRAK

YOU'RE OUTNUMBERED, OPTIMUS. THERE'S NO ESCAPE. MEGATRON RULES CYBERTRON.
HE HAS BEEN CHOSEN.

SHUNK
I HAVE BEEN CHOSEN, AS WELL.

TELL MEGATRON THAT HE WILL NOT CONTROL US.
WHAK

LOOKS LIKE OPTIMUS AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARE GETTING AWAY, CHROMIA.
IRONHIDE... I'M NOT BLIND.
IT'S JUST— HOW FAR DO THEY THINK THEY CAN GET?

FWOOSH
I WAS ONLY DOING WHAT CYBERTRON NEEDED.

FREEDOM HAD MADE US WEAK.

THERE WAS A UNIVERSE, JUST OUTSIDE OUR GRASP, WAITING TO BE REMADE IN OUR IMAGE.

IN MY IMAGE.

JOIN ME!

PLEDGE YOUR ALLEGIANCE TO YOUR NEW LEADER! PLEDGE YOUR ALLEGIANCE TO YOUR NEW NAME... FOR THOSE WHO SIDE WITH ME SHALL BE KNOWN AS—

—DECEPTICONS!

AS ALL WHO STAND AGAINST US FALL BENEATH THE IRON HEEL OF THE DECEPTICON EMPIRE...

...LET THE TRAITORS OF OUR OWN RACE BE CRUSHED FIRST.

WE SHALL STAMP OUT THE FALSE PRIME AND HIS LAP-DOG, OPTIMUS.

RHETORIC, OF COURSE.

I BELIEVED IN SENTINEL PRIME AS MUCH AS YOU DID—MORE, I SUSPECT. BUT ONE MUST GIVE THE MASSES A NARRATIVE TO BELIEVE IN.

AND ONE MUST GIVE THEM AN *ENEMY*.

SENTINEL—*WHAT'S HAPPENING?!*

YOUR *WORK*, SENTINEL—THEY'RE DESTROYING YOUR *LIFE'S WORK!*

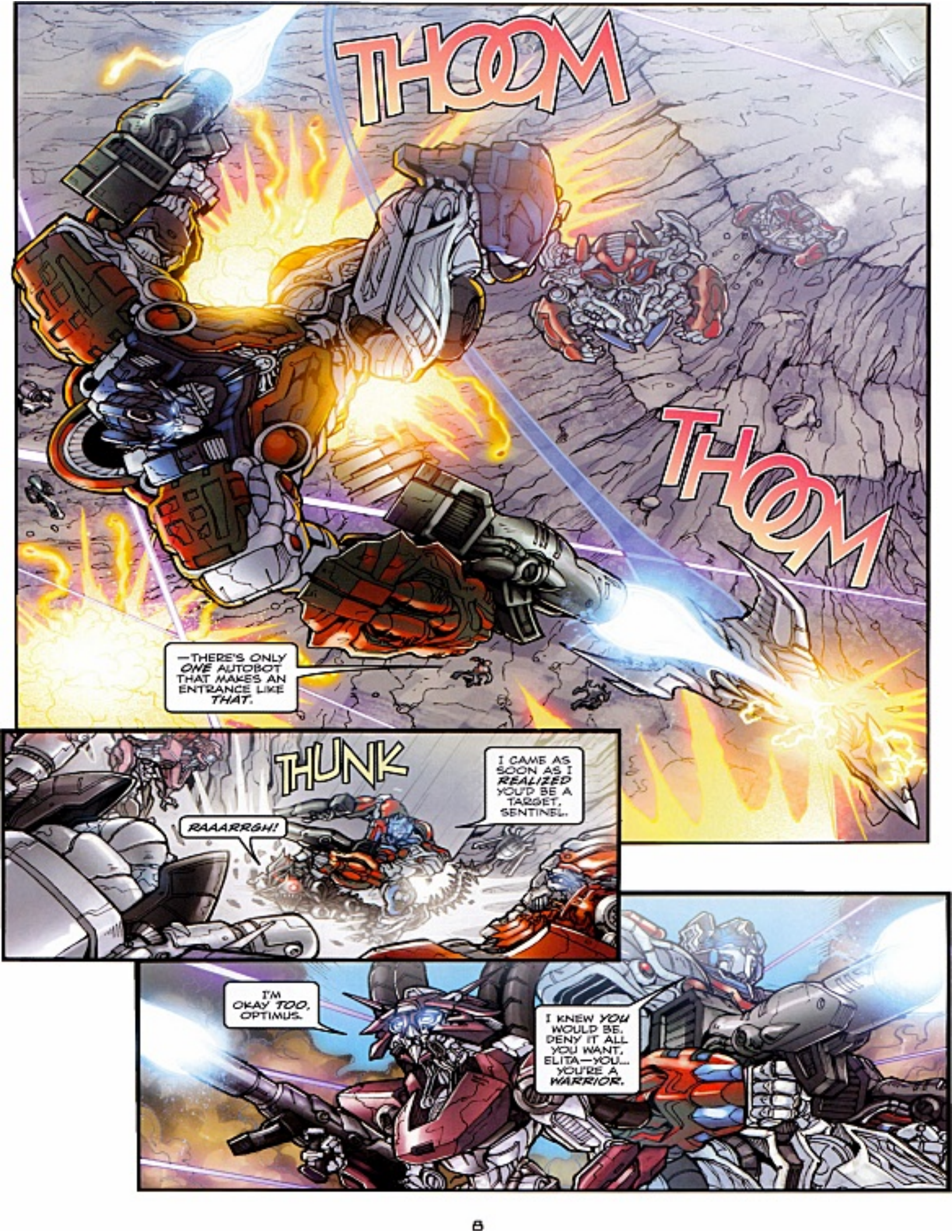
THE WORK CAN BE *RECREATED*—UNLIKE US.

WHY ATTACK AN *ARCHEOLOGICAL DIG*—WHAT COULD THE *MALCONTENTS* HAVE TO GAIN?

I HAVE NO IDEA, ELITA.

UP THERE—ANOTHER ONE!

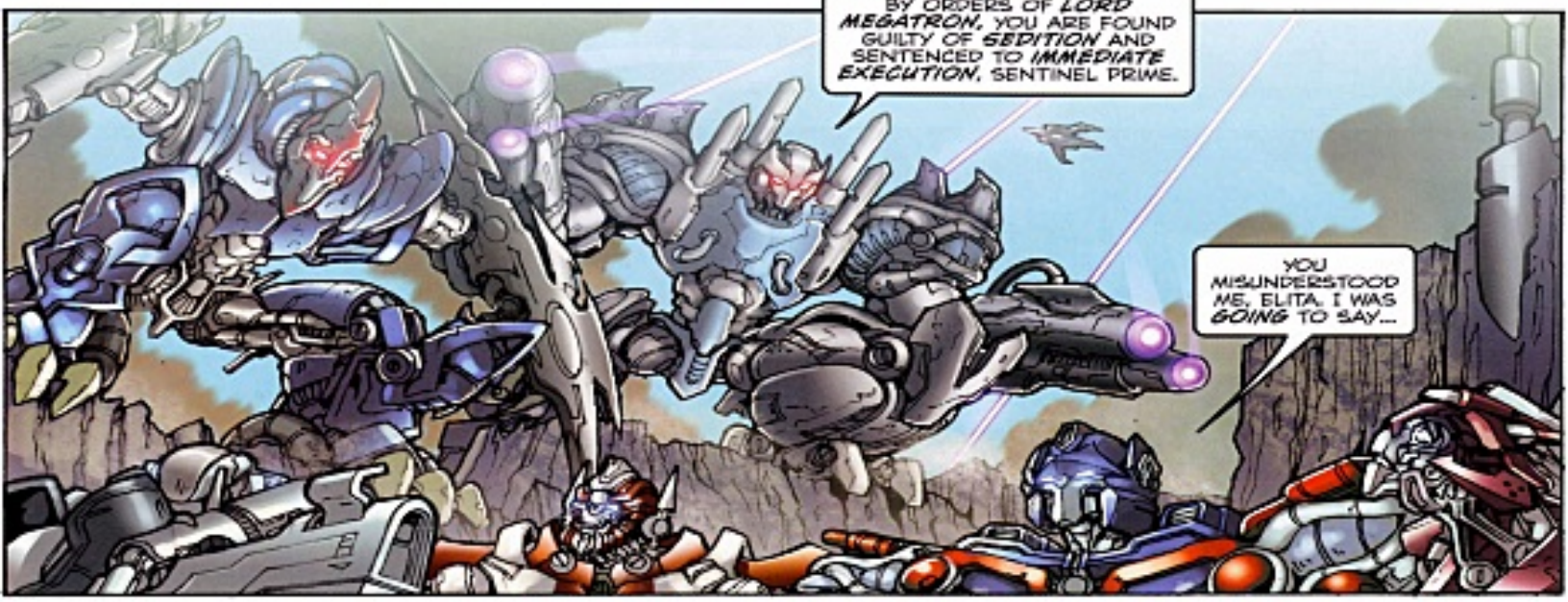
NO, WHEELJACK—


THOOM
THOOM
—THERE'S ONLY ONE AUTOBOT THAT MAKES AN ENTRANCE LIKE THAT.
THUNK
I CAME AS SOON AS I REALIZED YOU'D BE A TARGET, SENTINEL.
RAAARRGH!
I'M OKAY TOO, OPTIMUS.
I KNEW YOU WOULD BE. DENY IT ALL YOU WANT, ELITA—YOU... YOU'RE A WARRIOR.

I'M COMMITTED TO PEACE, BUT IF I HAVE TO FORCE THESE MALCONTENTS AWAY...
THAT'S NOT WHO'S BEHIND THIS. MEGATRON HAS DECLARED WAR.
WAR? AGAINST WHOM?

AGAINST ALL WHO STAND FOR FREEDOM.
ARCEE—
SHE'S FINE. WE GOT AWAY WHEN MEGATRON'S FORCES TRIED TO DETAIN US. BUT CHROMIA...

MY OWN SISTER— SIDING WITH MEGATRON?
I DIDN'T—
HALT, TRAITORS!


BY ORDERS OF LORD MEGATRON, YOU ARE FOUND GUILTY OF SEDITION AND SENTENCED TO IMMEDIATE EXECUTION, SENTINEL PRIME.
YOU MISUNDERSTOOD ME, ELITA. I WAS GOING TO SAY...

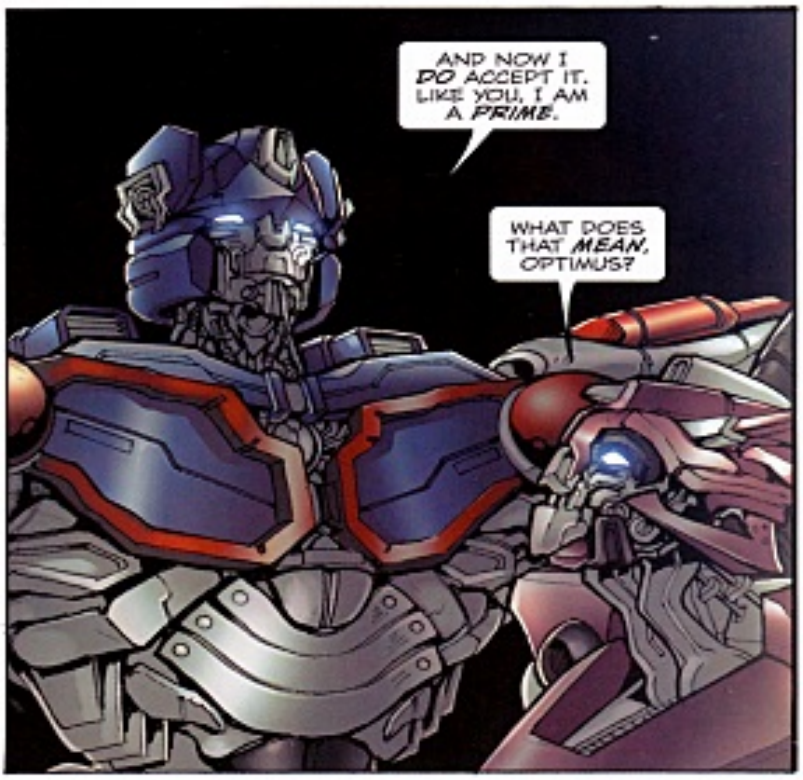
UK!
UT!
SHZAAKKK
SHZAAKKK
...CHROMIA IS RIGHT BEHIND ME.
WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE.
WHAT IS GOING ON?!
I WAS HELD UP CUTTING MY WAY THROUGH THESE BUTCHERS. SORRY FOR THE DRAMATIC ENTRANCE.
I WISH I COULD'VE GOT HERE EARLIER, SAVED SOME... SOME MORE...
IT'S OKAY, CHROMIA.
YOU DID WHAT YOU COULD.
ARE THERE MORE FROM THE DEFENSE FORCES WILLING TO TAKE ARMS AGAINST MEGATRON?
A FEW. IRONHIDE, I THINK... AT LEAST, I HOPE THE OLD GUY JOINS US.

WHERE SHALL WE TURN?
I KNOW A PLACE, IN TYGER PAX.
GOOD. FIRST WE REGROUP WITH ARCEE AND THE OTHERS IN BURTHOV, THEN WE CAN MOVE SOMEWHERE MORE PERMANENT.
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE.

THIS MARKING ON MY HELMET— ARCEE FOUND THE SAME SYMBOL AMONG SOME ARTIFACTS WE'D DUG UP.

WHAT IS IT?
IT'S... PROOF THAT SENTINEL WAS RIGHT.

IT'S THE SYMBOL OF THE PRIMES.
IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN YOUR NATURE TO NEED UNASSAILABLE FACTS IN ORDER TO ACCEPT THE TRUTH.


AND NOW I DO ACCEPT IT. LIKE YOU, I AM A PRIME.
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN, OPTIMUS?

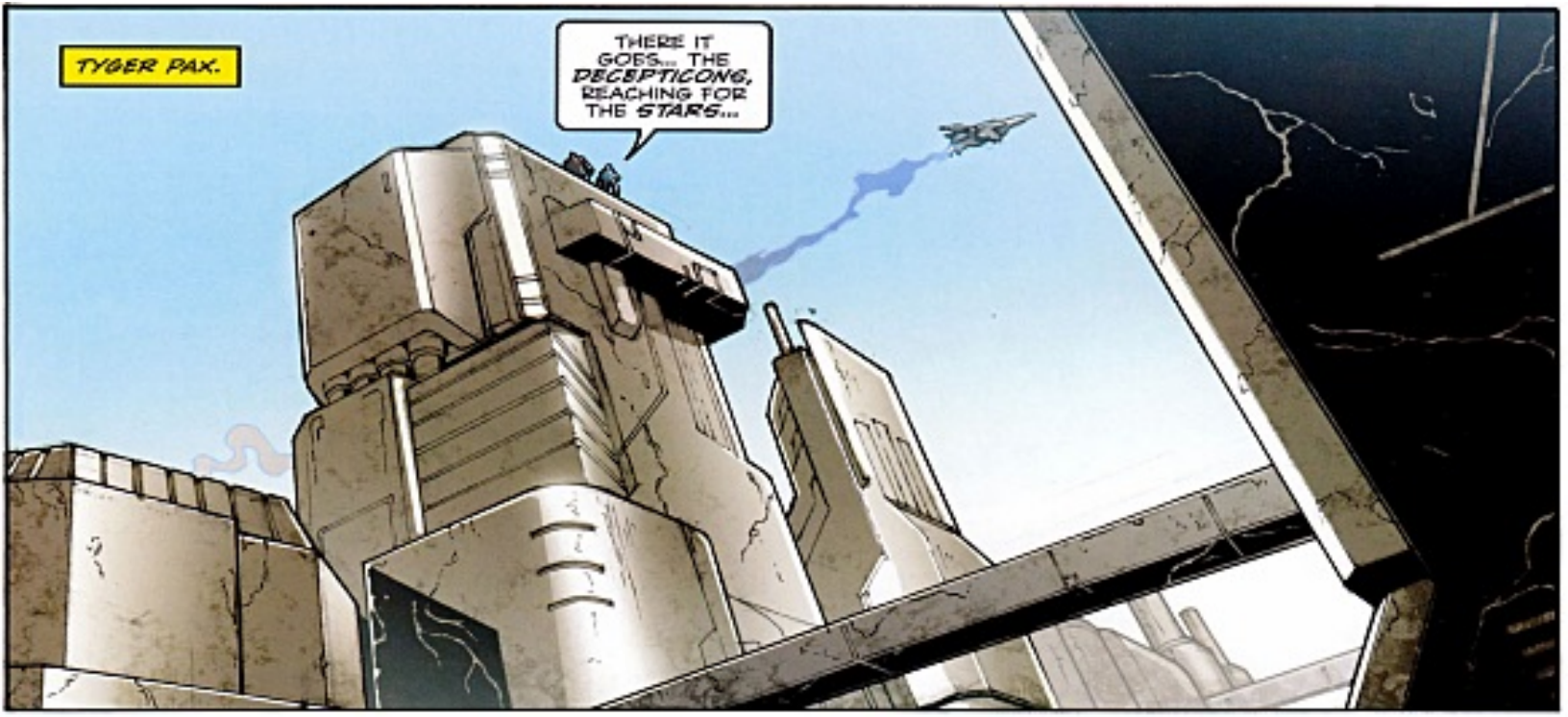
IT MEANS TROUBLE.
DO NOT THINK ME UNGRATEFUL.

IT WAS *YOUR* RESEARCH, OPTIMUS—YOUR DIGGING INTO CYBERTRON'S *HISTORY*...

...THAT LEAD ME TO THE *FALLEN*—THE GREATEST PRIME—WHO *DARED* TO REACH FOR MORE *POWER* THAN DESTINY HAD ALLOCATED.

THE OTHER PRIMES STOPPED HIM, BUT LEFT—SOMEWHERE IN SPACE—HIS *HARVESTER* OF *STARS*.

THAT COST THE *OLD PRIMES* THEIR *LIVES*. WHAT, I WONDER, WILL *MY* AMBITIONS COST THE PRIMES OF *TODAY*?


TYGER PAX.
THERE IT GOES... THE DECEPTICONS, REACHING FOR THE STARS...

...AND WE... WE HAVE TO STOP THEM.
YOU SOUND UNSURE, OPTIMUS.
EVEN AFTER ALL HE'S DONE... MEGATRON IS LIKE A BROTHER TO ME. I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN FIGHT HIM.

I'VE ALREADY FAILED YOU ONCE, SENTINEL.
YOU HAVE NEVER—
YOU TRUSTED ME TO HOLD A UNIFIED CYBERTRON TOGETHER, AND I TURNED YOU DOWN. I DIDN'T BELIEVE YOU.

BUT YOU BELIEVE NOW. YOURS SHALL NOT BE AN EASY PATH, OPTIMUS, BUT YOU WILL COME TO SEE WHAT MUST BE DONE.

I'M NOT READY FOR THIS...

FATE RARELY CALLS UPON US AT A MOMENT OF OUR CHOOSING.
WAS IT FATE THAT PLACED THE TWO OF US ON OPPOSING SIDES, VYING FOR THE ROLE OF CYBERTRON'S SAVIOR?
YOU CLAIMED FREEDOM AS YOUR SIDE'S PROVINCE... BUT WHAT IS FREEDOM? IT IS IMMATERIAL. AN ABSTRACT LUXURY FOR THOSE WITH THE MEANS TO ENJOY IT.
POWER IS REAL, MY BROTHER.
THE POWER OF AN EMPIRE. HARDENED AGAINST DANGER. THAT IS WHAT CYBERTRON NEEDED, AND WHAT I SOUGHT TO PROVIDE THROUGH THE ENDLESS QUARTEXES OF WAR THAT FOLLOWED.
OUR BATTLES TORE THE PLANET APART—THIS I ADMIT, THOUGH SURELY THE BLAME RESTS WITH YOU AS MUCH AS WITH ME.
AND ALWAYS, I BELIEVED IN CYBERTRON'S RESILIENCY.

YOU, AS ALWAYS... *DOUBTED.*

HOW MUCH LONGER CAN OUR PLANET ENDURE? THE WAR... IT'S KILLING CYBERTRON.

I BELIEVE *I* MAY HAVE A *SOLUTION*...

...MY EXPERIMENTS HAVE COME TO *FRUITION*. I HAVE CREATED SOMETHING THAT WILL *GUARANTEE* AN END TO THIS WAR.

YOU MEAN WE'D BE ABLE TO *CRUSH* THE DECEPTICONS—*KILL* THE LOT OF 'EM?

IF *THAT* IS WHAT OUR LEADER *CHOOSES*.

NO.

THAT'S THE METHOD OF OUR *ENEMY*. THERE *HAS* TO BE A WAY TO *WIN* WITHOUT RESORTING TO WHOLESALE *MURDER*.

YOU *CAN'T* BE SERIOUS! MEGATRON WOULDN'T *HESITATE* TO DESTROY *US*!

YOU CAME OVER TO *OUR SIDE*, IRONHIDE. YOU CHOSE *US* OVER MEGATRON. *WHY?*

BECAUSE WE'RE *BETTER* THAN HIM.

YOU'RE *RIGHT*, PRIME. IT'S NOT THE *AUTOBOT WAY*.

INDEED. MY INVENTION *DOES* PRESENT US WITH ANOTHER PATH TO VICTORY. OPTIMUS PRIME—

—YOUR *FOREFATHERS* WOULD BE *PROUD* OF *YOU*.

"A SECRET INVENTION THAT'LL END THE WAR? WHAT'S THE CATCH?" I ASK HIM.

SO SENTINEL SAYS, "IT NEEDS SPARK TO BE ACTIVATED. THIS TORCH HAS TO TOUCH THE ALLSPARK."

"BUT THE ALLSPARK IS IN THE DECEPTICON'S MOST HEAVILY GUARDED STRONGHOLD," I SAY, "WHO'S GONNA BE DUMB ENOUGH TO TRY THAT?"

IRONHIDE'S GOT A POINT, FOR ONCE—

HEY!

—THESE AREN'T TURBOFOXES WE'RE AFTER, ARCEE.

AND I'M NOT A HATCHLING, CHROMIA. I'VE LEARNED A THING OR TWO IN THIS WAR.

ARCEE— SHE IS ONLY CONCERNED.

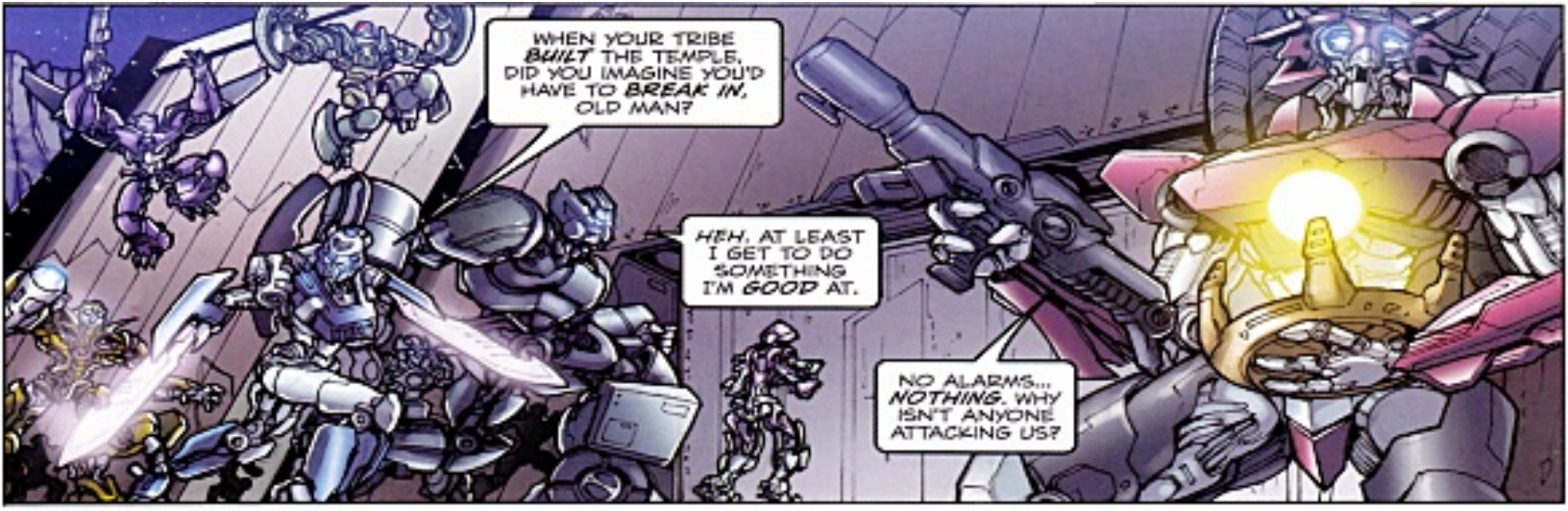
AND WHAT ABOUT YOU, ELITA?

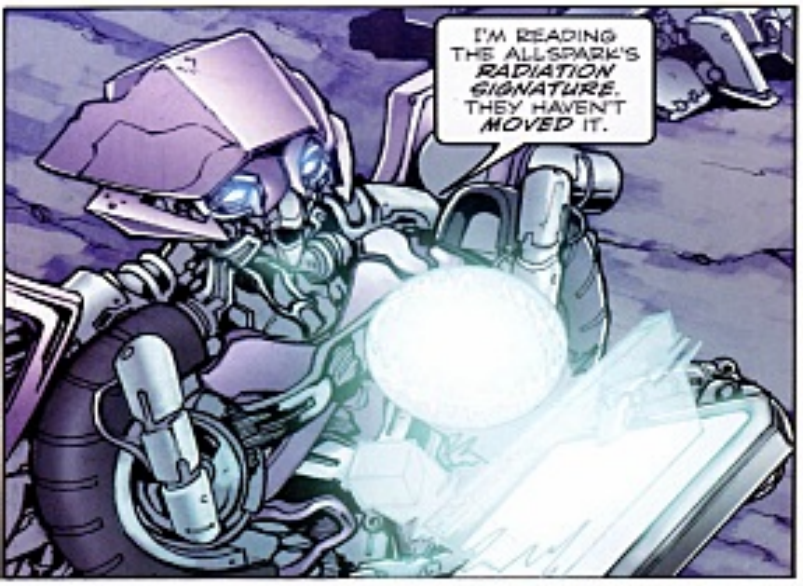
I'M HONORED TO HAVE BOTH MY SISTERS WITH ME.

THERE IT IS—THE GIMFUR TEMPLE. HOME OF THE ALLSPARK.

YOU THREE GET SENTINEL'S TORCH INSIDE, THE REST OF US'LL KEEP THE DECEPTICON'S BUSY...

...FOR AS LONG AS WE CAN.

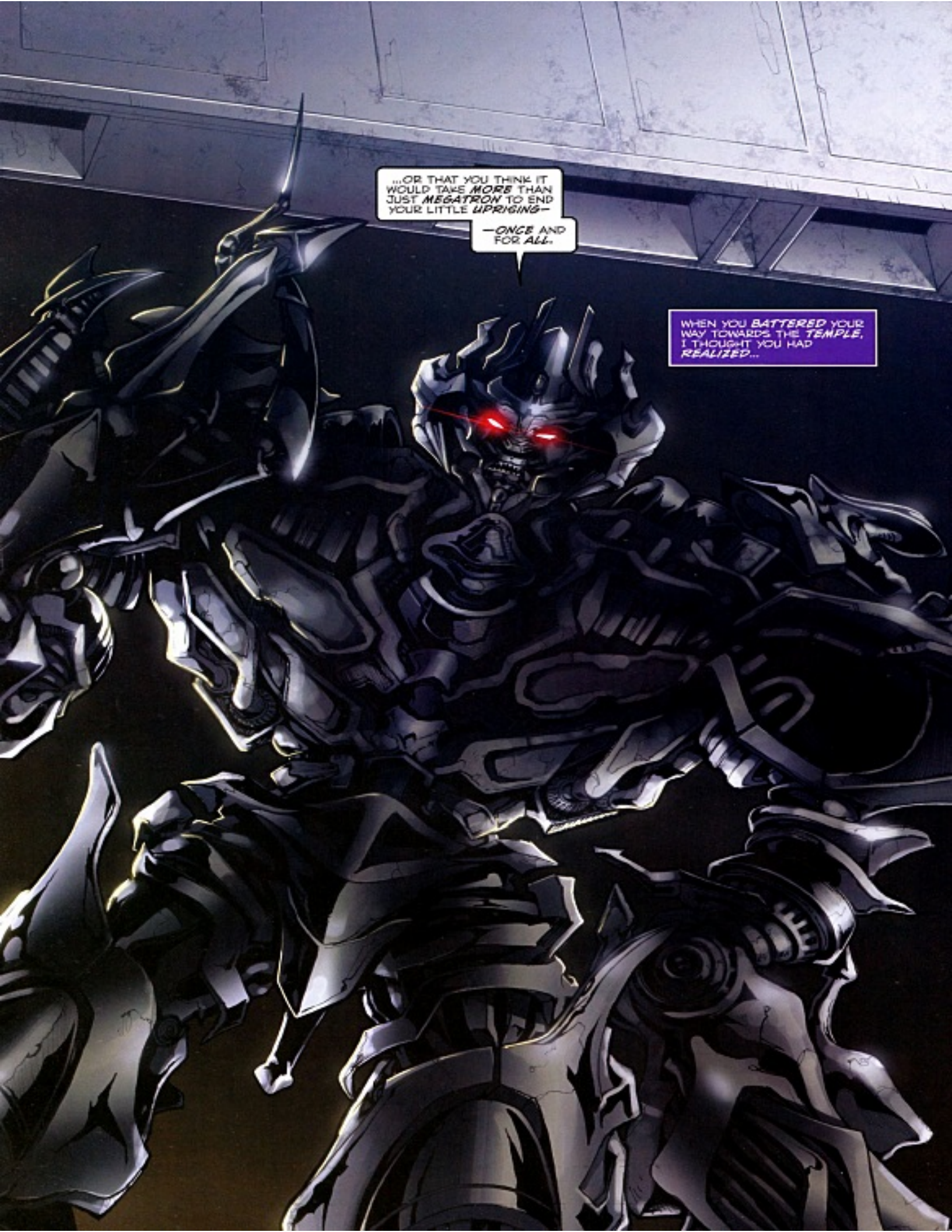

WHEN YOUR TRIBE BUILT THE TEMPLE, DID YOU IMAGINE YOU'D HAVE TO BREAK IN, OLD MAN?
HEH. AT LEAST I GET TO DO SOMETHING I'M GOOD AT.
NO ALARMS... NOTHING. WHY ISN'T ANYONE ATTACKING US?

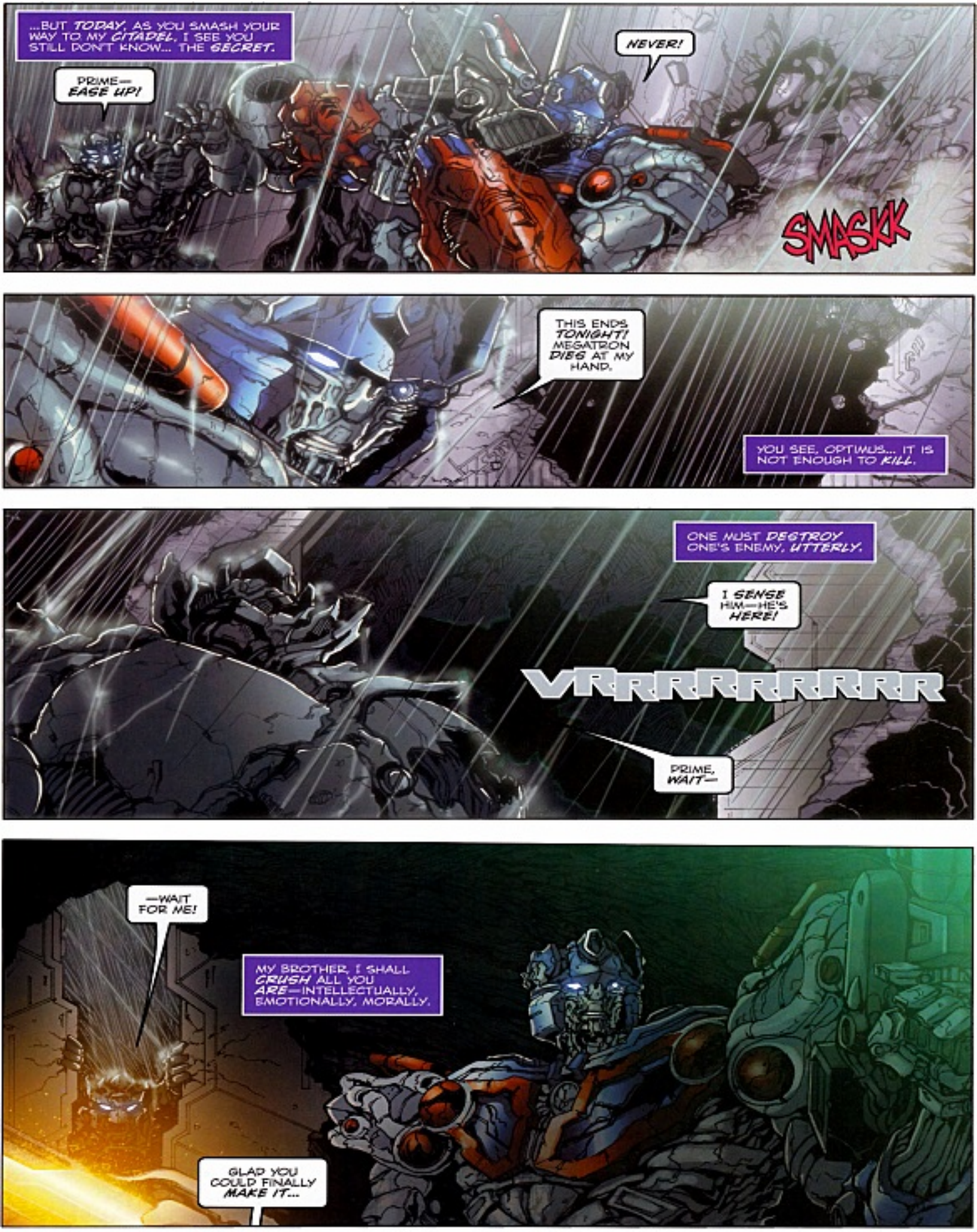

I'M READING THE ALLSPARK'S RADIATION SIGNATURE. THEY HAVEN'T MOVED IT.

VRRRRRRRRRRR
WHAT'S THAT?

VRRRRRRRRRRR
SURRENDER, DECEPTICONS! WE'VE GOT YOU SURROUNDED.
I DON'T KNOW WHICH IS MORE INSULTING...

VRRRRRRRRRRR
...THAT YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD MAKE YOUR WAY TO SIMFUR WITHOUT MY AGENTS FINDING OUT...


...OR THAT YOU THINK IT WOULD TAKE MORE THAN JUST MEGATRON TO END YOUR LITTLE UPRISING—
—ONCE AND FOR ALL.
WHEN YOU BATTERED YOUR WAY TOWARDS THE TEMPLE, I THOUGHT YOU HAD REALIZED...

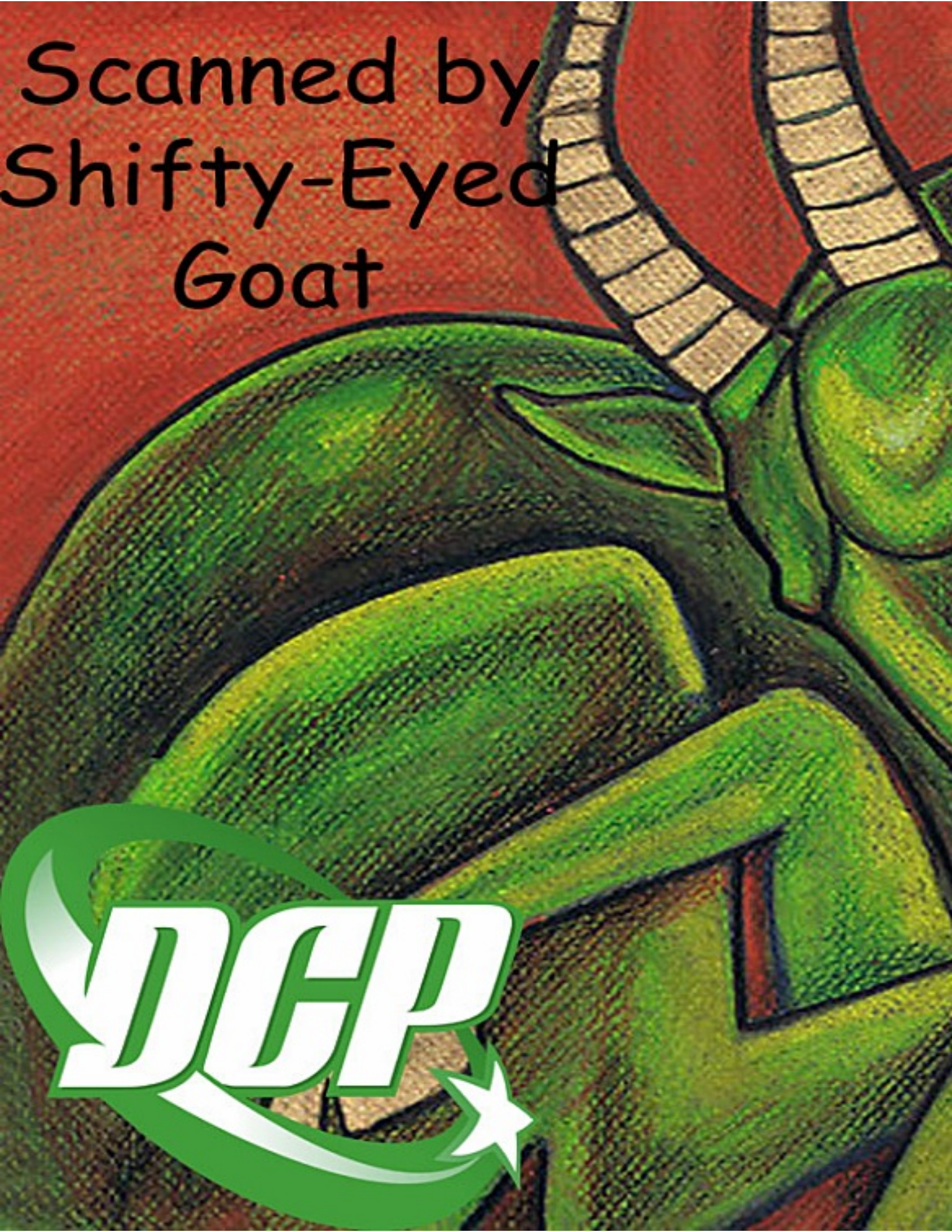

...BUT TODAY, AS YOU SMASH YOUR WAY TO MY CITADEL, I SEE YOU STILL DON'T KNOW... THE SECRET.
PRIME— EASE UP!
NEVER!
SMASKK
THIS ENDS TONIGHT! MEGATRON DIES AT MY HAND.
YOU SEE, OPTIMUS... IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO KILL.
ONE MUST DESTROY ONE'S ENEMY, UTTERLY.
I SENSE HIM—HE'S HERE!
VRRRRRRRRRRR
PRIME, WAIT—
—WAIT FOR ME!
MY BROTHER, I SHALL CRUSH ALL YOU ARE—INTELLECTUALLY, EMOTIONALLY, MORALLY.
GLAD YOU COULD FINALLY MAKE IT...

...I TRUST YOU FOUND THE JOURNEY PLEASANT.
HIDING BEHIND HATCHLINGS, MEGATRON? HOW VERY LIKE YOU.
NOT JUST ANY HATCHLINGS. DECEPTICON HATCHLINGS. YOUR FUTURE ENEMIES, OPTIMUS.

NOW, DO TELL ME—ARE YOU FINALLY WILLING TO DO WHAT IS NECESSARY?
WILL YOU FULFILL YOUR VOW TO KILL ME AND MY DECEPTICONS, REGARDLESS OF THE COST?
OR WILL YOU FOLLOW YOUR MENTOR'S WISHES AND ALLOW THE HATCHLINGS THE FREEDOM TO LIVE AND CHOSE THEIR OWN PATH...
...EVEN IF THEIR PATH IS TO SERVE MEGATRON?
AFTER WHAT YOU'VE DONE, "BROTHER"?

I BELIEVE WE BOTH KNOW THE ANSWER.
YOU WILL BE WORSE THAN DEAD, OPTIMUS...
...FOR I SHALL MAKE YOU MINE.
TO BE CONCLUDED...

NEXT ISSUE:
THE FINAL BATTLE!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Eons ago, on the distant planet of Cybertron... with his ally Ironhide following. Optimus Prime has finally come face-to-face with Megatron, with one goal in mind: to kill him. But Megatron has surrounded himself with hatchlings, presenting Optimus with no opening—other than harming the hatchlings to accomplish his goal. Now the Autobot leader must make a choice...

But what led to this? Once, Optimus and Megatron were close friends—brothers-in-arms under the mentorship of Sentinel Prime, who (with their help) had united the warring tribes of Cybertron, and brought the planet itself into orbit around a star, thus providing the energy needed to fuel the life-giving AllSpark and restore the world to glory. But Megatron became jealous of the others' shared heritage as descendants of the Primes—the first race of Cybertronians.

Megatron proclaimed himself ruler of the planet, declaring war on all who opposed him. As the endless war raged, Sentinel developed a secret weapon—one that held the promise to create peace. As the Autobot forces moved in toward the AllSpark to activate this mysterious device, only one thing stood in their way: Megatron.

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Special thanks to Hasbro's Aaron Archer, Michael Kelly, Amie Lozanski, Val Roca, Ed Lane, Michael Provost, Samantha Lomow, and Michael Verrecchia for their invaluable assistance.

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HE BROUGHT THIS ON *HIMSELF*.

PRIME!

LOOK AT THE AUTOBOT *CRY* FOR HIS *MASTER*...

...WE SHOULD PUT HIM OUT OF HIS *MISERY*, SHOCKWAVE.

I *CONCUR*.

I TOLD HIM WHAT I WAS *DOING*. I *TOLD* HIM NOT TO COME.

YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE *SIDED* WITH OPTIMUS PRIME. *YOU* DIDN'T HAVE TO DIE TODAY, IRONHIDE.

THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *ME* AN' CREEPS LIKE *YOU*.

I *STAND* BY MY FRIENDS.

YOU *BETRAYED* YOUR FRIENDS.

NO. IT WAS *YOU*, STARSCREAM— AND YOUR *MASTER*— WHO BETRAYED *CYBERTRON*.

ENOUGH. DISCUSSION IS *ILLOGICAL*.

GOOD POINT, SHOCKWAVE...

IRONHIDE BROUGHT THIS ON HIMSELF.

I HAVE A MISSION TO COMPLETE, WHATEVER—WHOEVER—IT COSTS.

...IT'S TIME TO DIE, TRAITOR.

BRAKKA BRAKKA

I IGNORE IRONHIDE. I HAVE TO.

WELL, OPTIMUS? YOU'D BEST HURRY.

YOUR SOLDIER IS DYING AND THE HATCHLINGS ARE GETTING HUNGRY.

IN FACT, THEY'RE RATHER RAVENOUS WHEN KEPT AWAY FROM THEIR ENERGON.

PRIME! PRIME, I CAN'T HOLD 'EM FOREVER!
CHOOM CHOOM
ENERGON...
ENERGON...
THE FUTURE OF THE DECEPTICON EMPIRE CAN BE VERY, VERY CRANKY WHEN THEY'RE HUNGRY.
SO, DO YOU KILL THEM IN ORDER TO KILL ME? OR WILL YOU TRY TO RESCUE YOUR POOR SOLDIER, INSTEAD?
HE'S NOT MY SOLDIER, MEGATRON.
HE'S MY FRIEND.
AS YOU ONCE WERE, "BROTHER."

BUT THAT WAS A *LONG TIME* AGO.

BEFORE YOUR ARMY DECLARED *WAR* ON THOSE OF US WHO STOOD FOR *FREEDOM*.

BEFORE OUR *LAST HOPE* RELIED ON *ELITA-ONE* REACHING THE *ALLSPARK*.

BEFORE *YOU* STOOD IN OUR WAY, MEGATRON.

AND *BEHIND* US...

FALL BACK!

NO—WE NEED TO GIVE ELITA *TIME!*

...STOOD YOUR *DECEPTICONS*.

DAMN IT!

CHOOM

MAKE YOUR *PEACE* WITH *PRIMUS*, AUTOBOTS— FOR *TONIGHT* YOU *DIE!*

THERE IS *NOWHERE* TO RUN, AUTOBOTS.

WAIT... THE *FEMALES!*

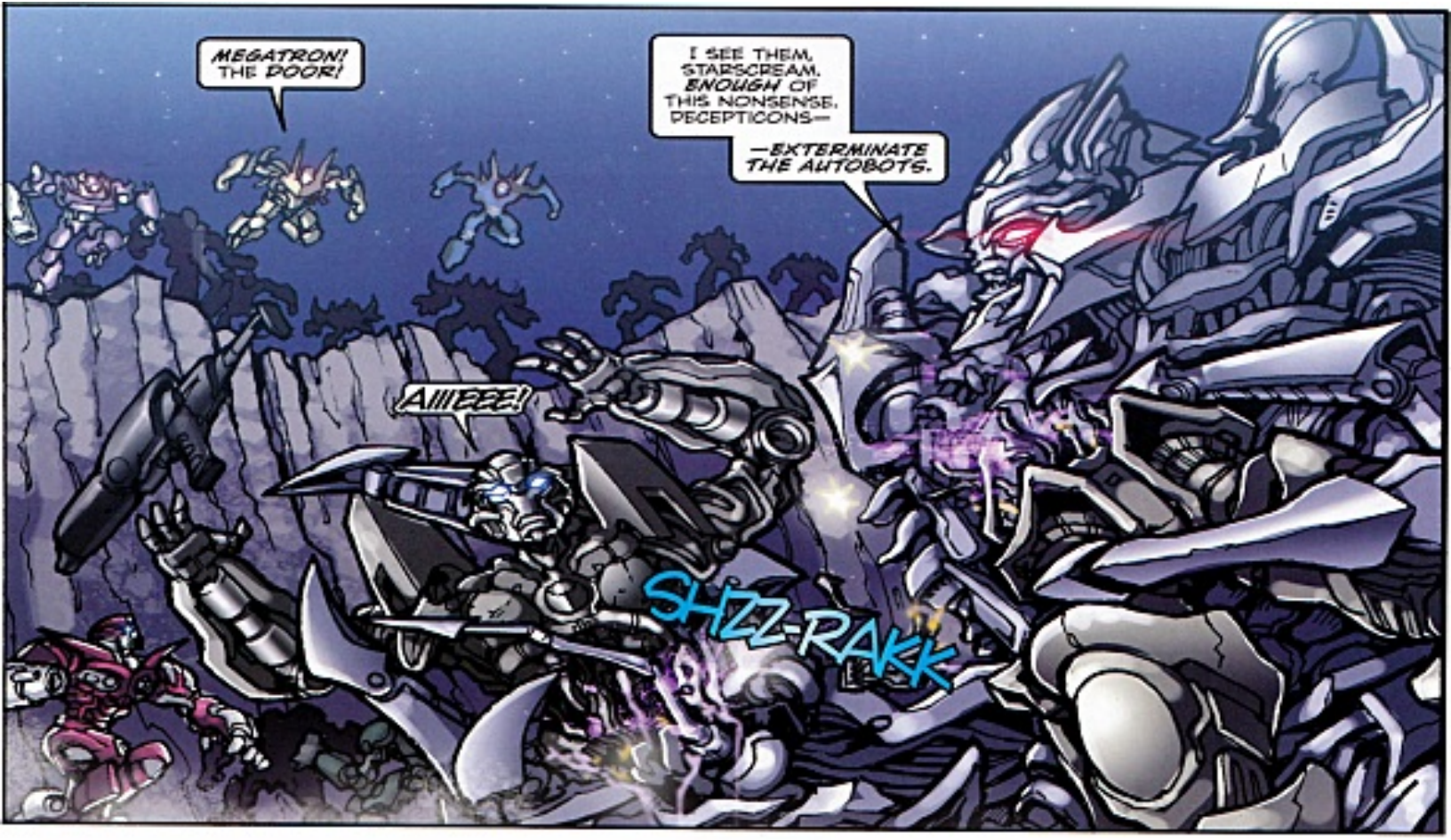
CHOOM

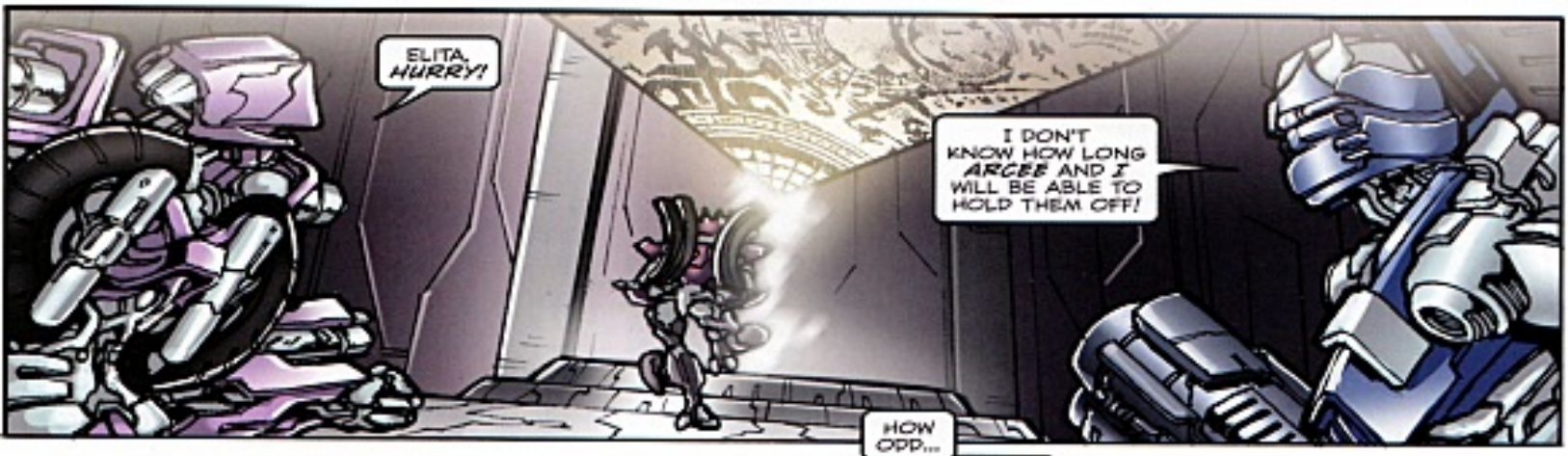
IS THIS GONNA *WORK*, CHROMIA?

AS LONG AS THEY DIDN'T CHANGE THE *ACCESS CODES*...

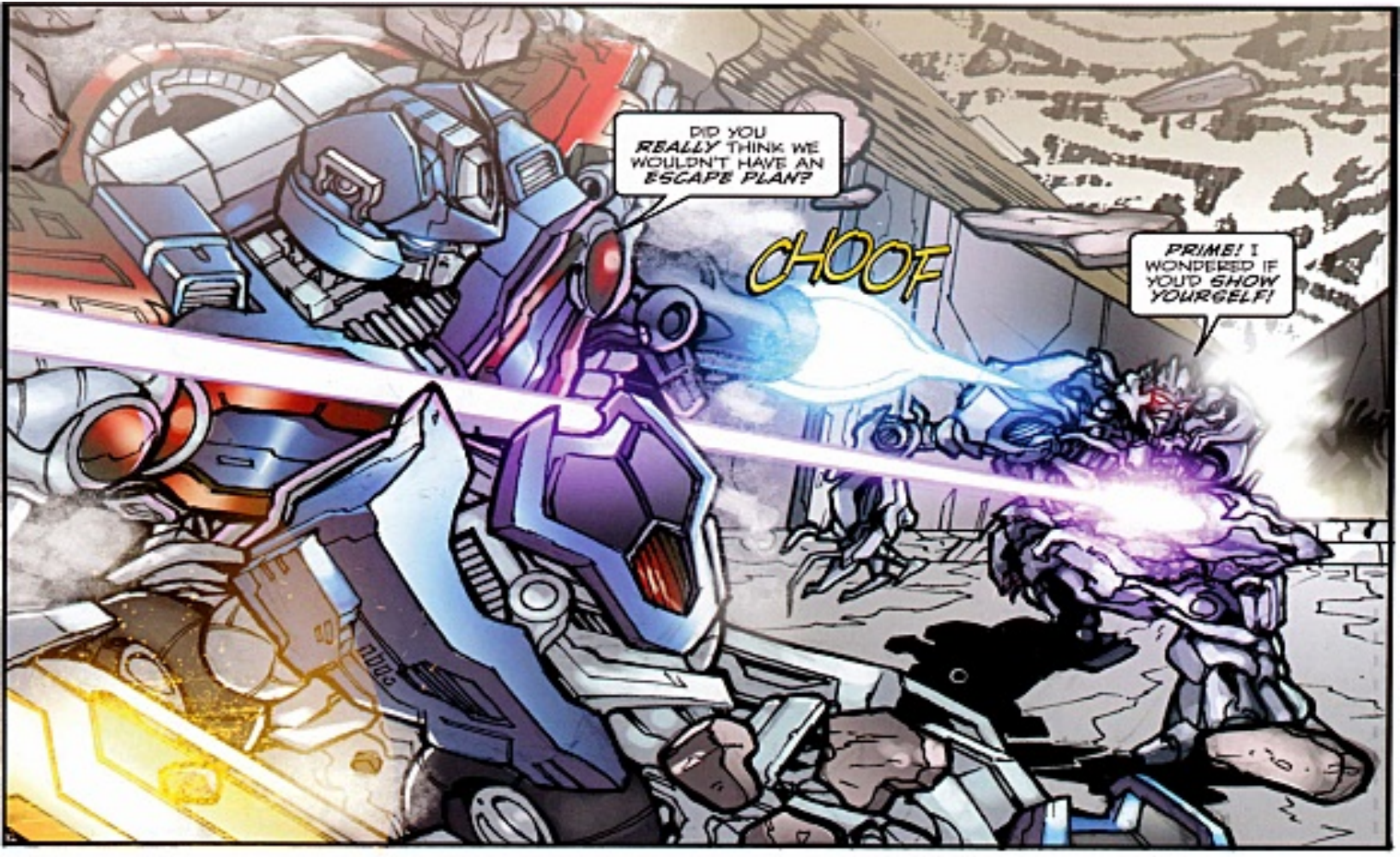
BLEEP

...YEAH, WE'RE *IN*.


MEGATRON! THE DOOR!
I SEE THEM, STARSCREAM. ENOUGH OF THIS NONSENSE. DECEPTICONS—
—EXTERMINATE THE AUTOBOTS.
AIIIEEE!
SHZZ-RAKK

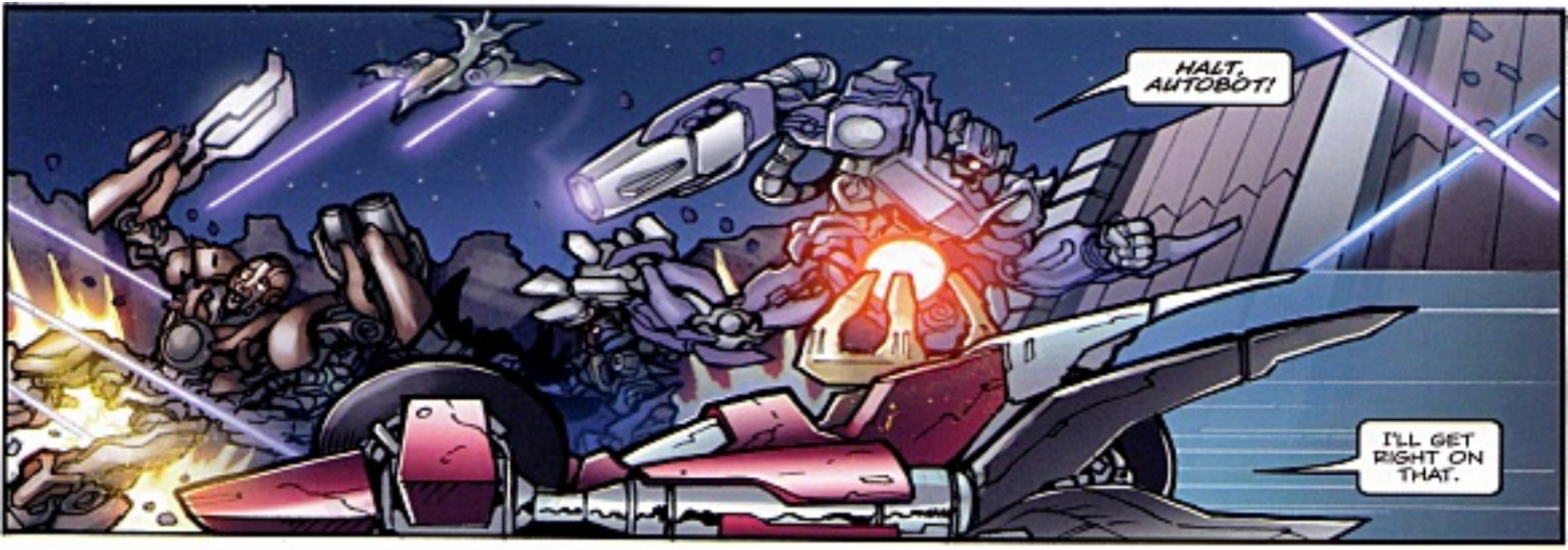

ELITA, HURRY!
I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG ARCEE AND I WILL BE ABLE TO HOLD THEM OFF!

HOW ODD...
...I KNOW EXACTLY HOW LONG.
KA-KROOM
CHA-KRAMM

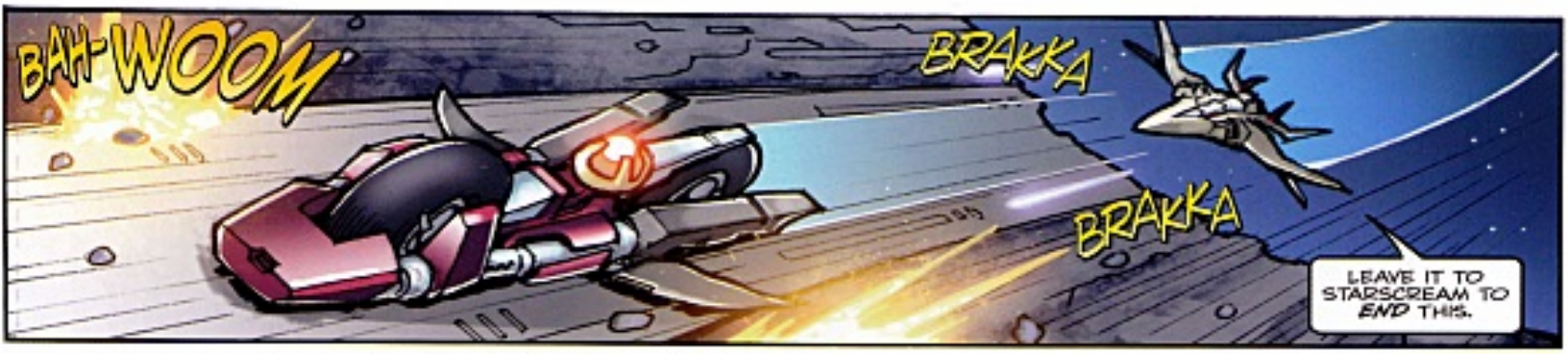

DID YOU REALLY THINK WE WOULDN'T HAVE AN ESCAPE PLAN?
CHOOF
PRIME! I WONDERED IF YOU'D SHOW YOURSELF!

GOT IT! OPTIMUS—
VWOOSH

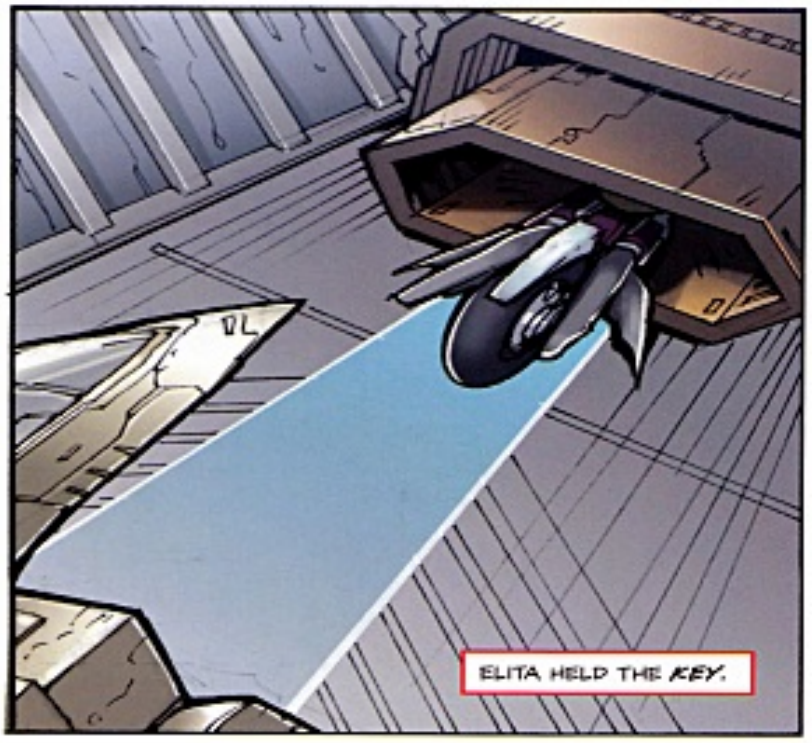
GO, ELITA! I'LL KEEP MEGATRON BUSY!
SOMEONE— STOP HER!

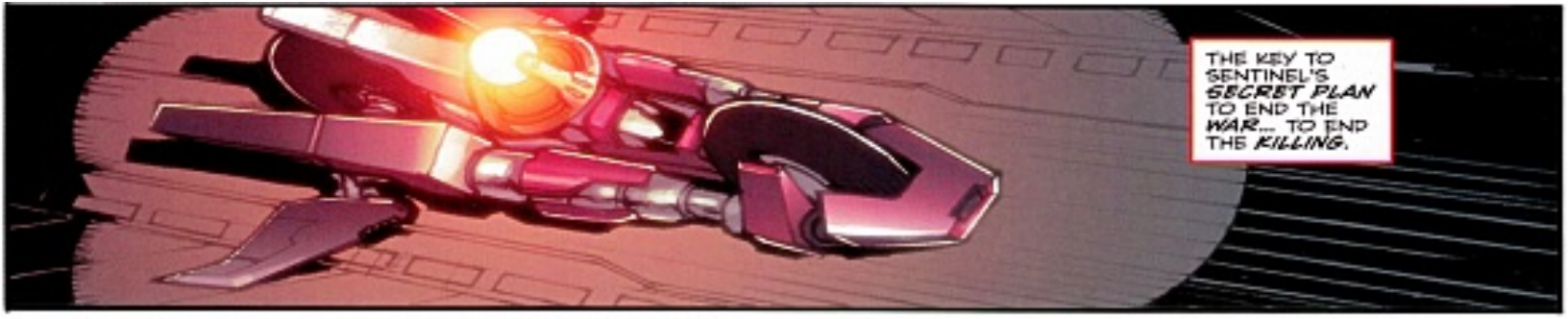

HALT, AUTOBOT!
I'LL GET RIGHT ON THAT.

YOUR INSOLENCE SHALL BE YOUR UNDOING.
AS ALWAYS, SHOCKWAVE—YOUR RHETORIC OUTMATCHES YOUR ABILITY.


BAH-WOOM
BRAKKA
BRAKKA
LEAVE IT TO STARSCREAM TO END THIS.

BRAKKA
ONLY IF YOU CAN SHRINK.
KA-THROOSH


ELITA HELD THE KEY.


THE KEY TO SENTINEL'S SECRET PLAN TO END THE WAR... TO END THE KILLING.

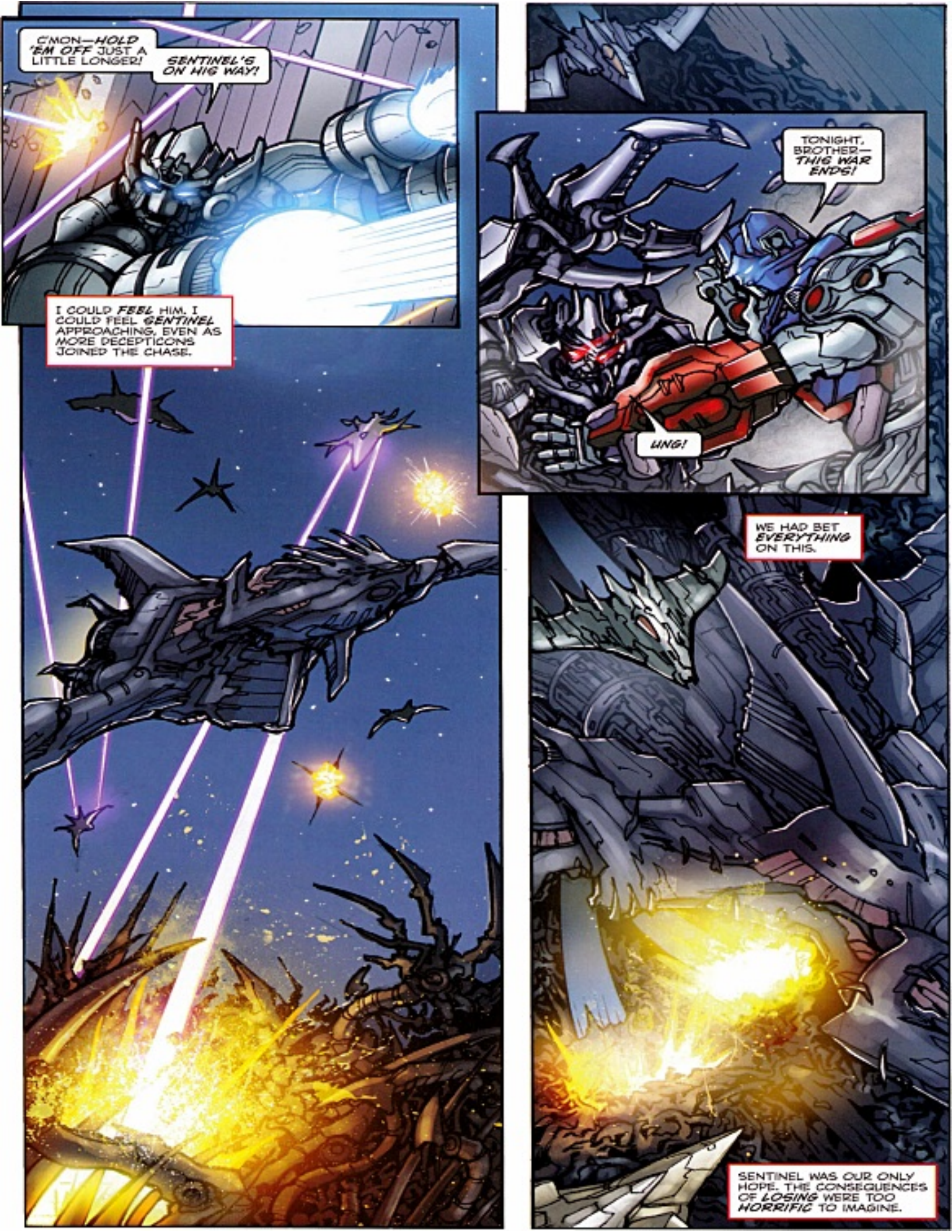
TWO SHIPS HAD BEEN PREPARED TO CARRY US TO A NEW FUTURE.
STARSCREAM'S ON MY TRAIL—I TRIED TO LOSE HIM, BUT—
BUT HE'S STARSCREAM. WE'LL HAVE TO MOVE FAST.

I WILL PILOT THE ARK TO OPTIMUS AND THE OTHERS AT THE TEMPLE.
WHEELJACK—TAKE THE SECOND CRAFT TO TYGER PAX AND GET THE REST OF THE AUTOBOTS.
BUT, SENTINEL...

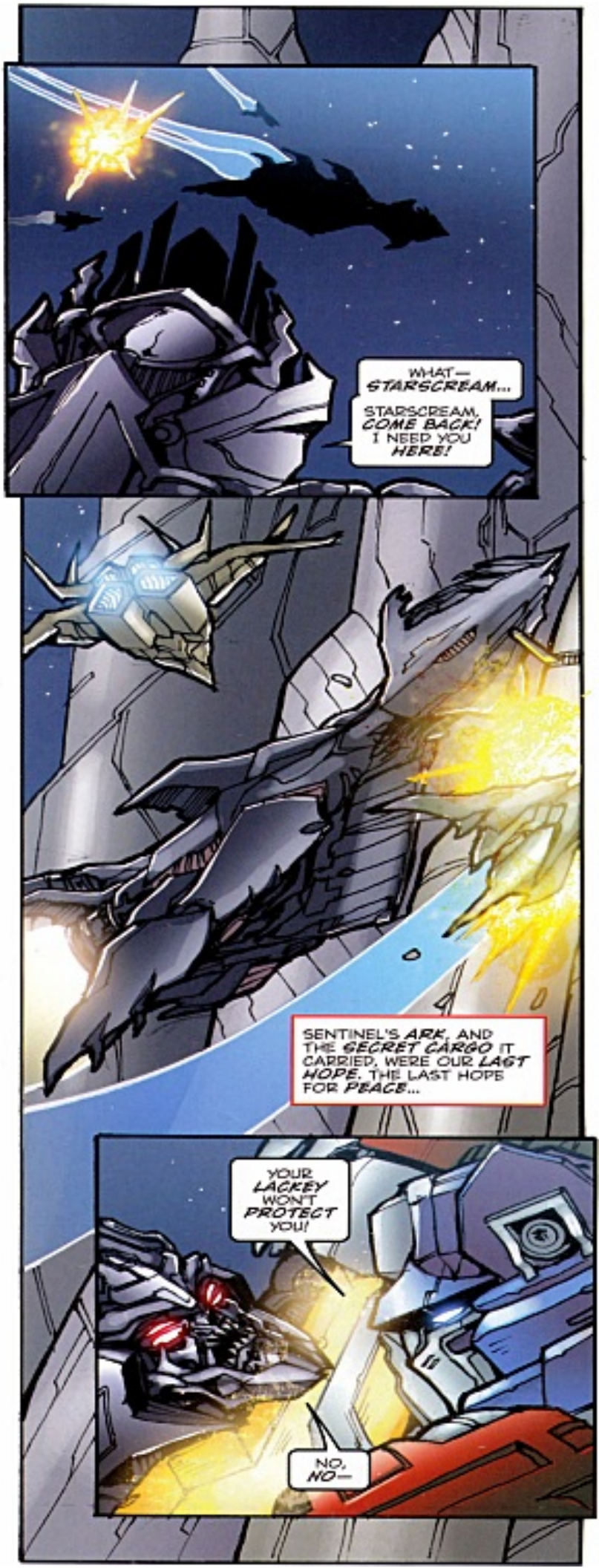
WHAT WOULD YOU GIVE TO SAVE OUR WORLD?
ANYTHING. YOU KNOW THAT.
THEN DO THIS FOR ME.

DO THIS AND THE WAR'S OVER, OLD FRIEND.

I HOPE SENTINEL IS RIGHT.
HE USUALLY IS. AND WE'D BETTER MOVE.


C'MON—HOLD 'EM OFF JUST A LITTLE LONGER!
SENTINEL'S ON HIS WAY!
I COULD FEEL HIM. I COULD FEEL SENTINEL APPROACHING, EVEN AS MORE DECEPTICONS JOINED THE CHASE.
TONIGHT, BROTHER— THIS WAR ENDS!
UNG!
WE HAD BET EVERYTHING ON THIS.
SENTINEL WAS OUR ONLY HOPE. THE CONSEQUENCES OF LOSING WERE TOO HORRIFIC TO IMAGINE.

INDEED, OPTIMUS—YOU SHALL FALL!
SENTINEL PRIME FLEW WITH THE SAME HONOR AND SENSE OF PURPOSE HE HAD INSTILLED IN ME.
I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND WHY YOU TURNED OUT THE WAY YOU DID, MEGATRON.
HE WAS YOUR MENTOR AS WELL.


WHAT— STARSCREAM...
STARSCREAM, COME BACK! I NEED YOU HERE!
SENTINEL'S ARK, AND THE SECRET CARGO IT CARRIED, WERE OUR LAST HOPE. THE LAST HOPE FOR PEACE...
YOUR LACKEY WON'T PROTECT YOU!
NO, NO—

...A HOPE THAT VANISHED.
—NO.

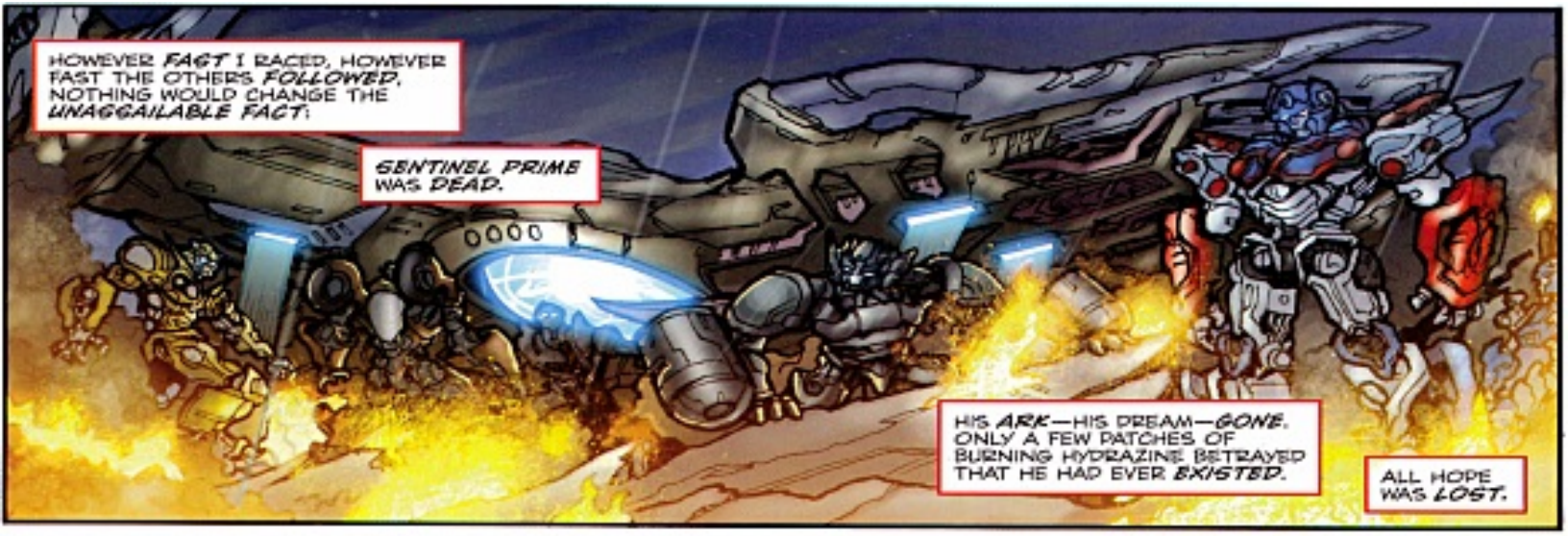
IT... CAN'T BE.

NOOOOO!

AUTOBOTS— FOLLOW PRIME!
FALL BACK AND LOOK FOR SURVIVORS!

ANNIHILATE THEM. DO NOT LET PRIME ESCAPE.
CHOOM
NO, SHOCKWAVE. LET HIM COME TO US. AND I ASSURE YOU...

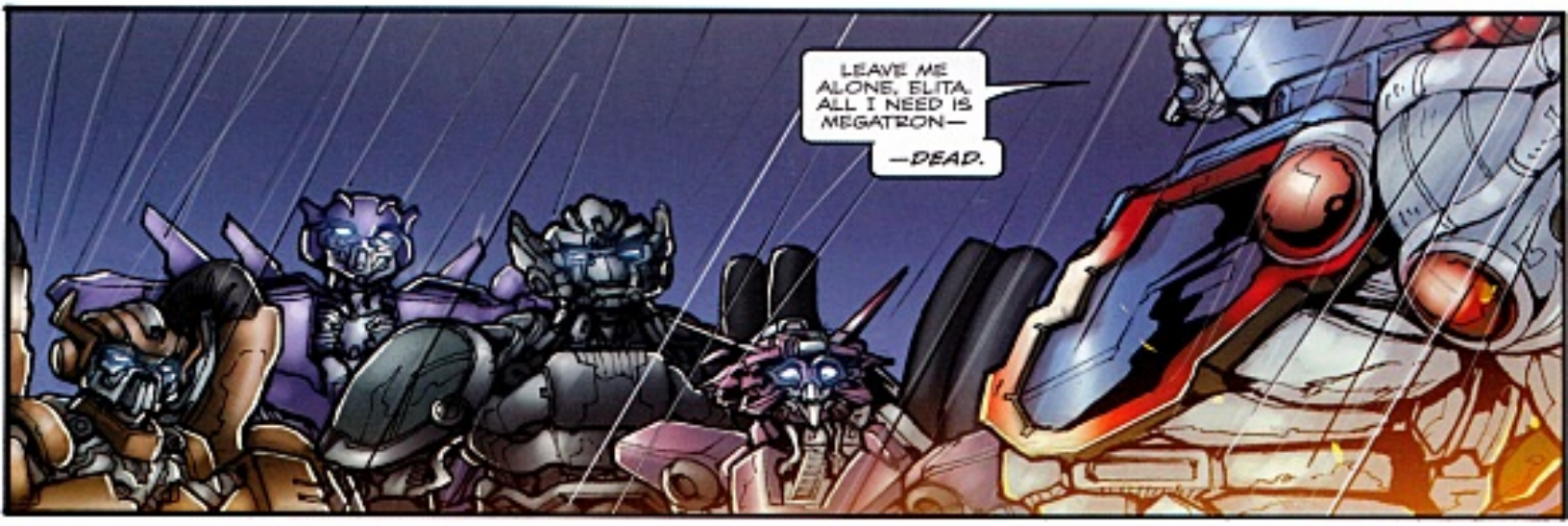
...HE WILL.


HOWEVER FAST I RACED, HOWEVER FAST THE OTHERS FOLLOWED, NOTHING WOULD CHANGE THE UNAGGAILABLE FACT:
SENTINEL PRIME WAS DEAD.
HIS ARK—HIS DREAM—GONE. ONLY A FEW PATCHES OF BURNING HYDRAZINE BETRAYED THAT HE HAD EVER EXISTED.
ALL HOPE WAS LOST.

I WAS WRONG.
MEGATRON'S EVIL CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO SURVIVE.

REGROUP IN TYGER PAX. EVERYONE, GET ONBOARD THE... THE REMAINING ARK.
WHEELJACK—I HAVE A MISSION FOR YOU...

...BUT ONCE I GIVE THE SOLDIERS THEIR ORDERS, THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO.
OPTIMUS—I KNOW WHAT SENTINEL MEANT TO YOU. YOU NEED YOUR FRIENDS NOW.


LEAVE ME ALONE, ELITA. ALL I NEED IS MEGATRON—
—DEAD.

BUT YOU *DIDN'T* LEAVE ME, ELITA. *I* LEFT *YOU*.

IRONHIDE PRESSED ON, EVEN AS THE OTHERS DIED AROUND US. A FRIEND TO THE END. AN *ACCEPTABLE LOSS* IN MY QUEST FOR *VENGEANCE*.

I WAS *THERE* WHEN SENTINEL TOLD YOU OF YOUR *DESTINY*. I WAS THERE WHEN YOU *REJECTED* IT.

YOU'VE *NEVER* HAD WHAT IT *TAKES* TO ACCEPT THAT KIND OF *RESPONSIBILITY*, BROTHER.

ENERSON...

ENERSON...

KA-THOOM

YOU SAY YOU'RE WILLING TO DO *ANYTHING*.

BUT YOU ARE *WEAK*.

ONE MUST *SACRIFICE* TO WIN.

I AGREE.

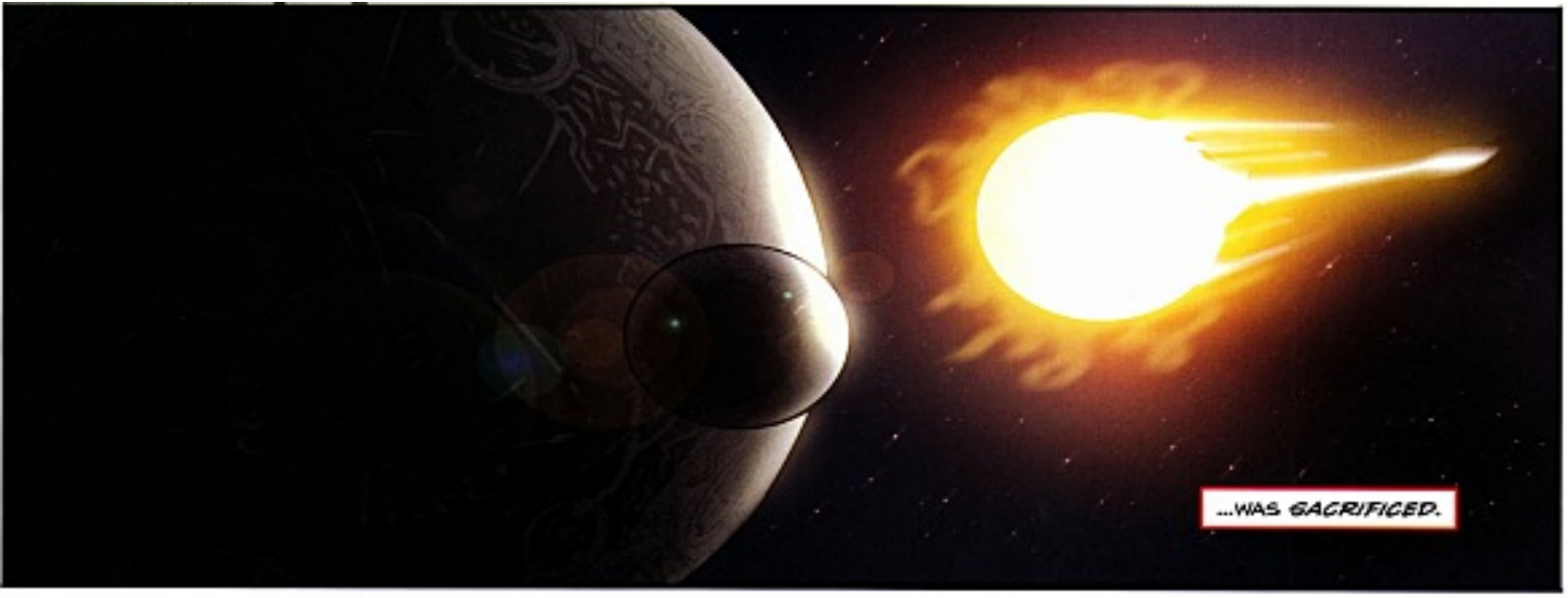
SLAKT

THE ORDER GIVEN, WHEELJACK'S TEAM STORMS GIMFUR, AGAIN.

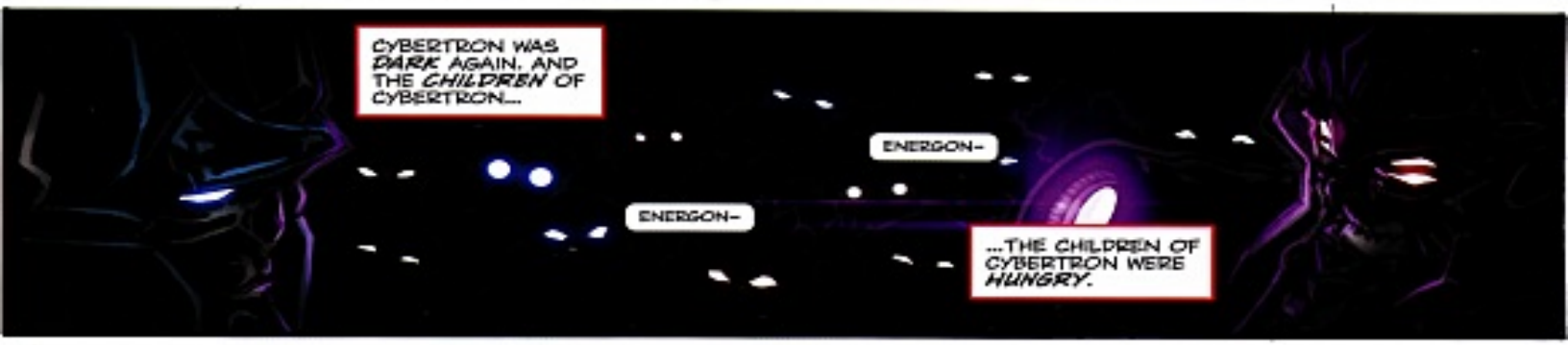
BUT THE DECEPTICON FORCES HAVE BEEN WEAKENED BY OUR EARLIER ASSAULT. AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE MOST POWERFUL OF THEIR NUMBER ARE OCCUPIED.

ARCEE AND CHROMIA TAKE THE ALLSPARK, RIPPING IT FROM ITS MOORING.

SHORTING OUT THE CONNECTION TO THE MACHINE SENTINEL AND WHEELJACK HAD BUILT, THE LAST LEGACY OF MY MENTOR...


...WAS SACRIFICED.

WITH THE ALLSPARK STOLEN, OUR SUN SLIPPED AWAY.


CYBERTRON WAS DARK AGAIN, AND THE CHILDREN OF CYBERTRON...
ENERGON–
ENERGON–
...THE CHILDREN OF CYBERTRON WERE HUNGRY.

ENERGON—
ENERGON—
I WON'T LAY A FINGER ON YOUR NEXT GENERATION, MEGATRON...

...BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HAS TO FEED THEM.
PRIME, NO!

YOU SHALL NEVER DEFEAT ME!
YOU CAN'T STOP THE FUTURE! I AM TOMORROW!
PRIME!
ENERGON—!
ENERGON—!
ENERGON—!

I *MEANT* WHAT I SAID. I HAD BEEN WILLING TO SACRIFICE *EVERYTHING* FOR VENGEANCE. BUT THEN, IRONHIDE...

WHAT'S *HAPPENING?*

AK!

CHAMM

VOOSH VOOSH

...HE WOULD SACRIFICE ANYTHING FOR *LIFE.*

THE AUTOBOT'S REVENGE—

CHOOM

VOOSH

—IS TO *LIVE.*

DID—DID YOU *DO* IT?

LONG AGO, WHEN *WE* FOUGHT *AGAINST* EACH OTHER... IF I HAD DONE WHAT *MEGATRON* CONSIDERED *NECESSARY*...

...I'D NEVER HAVE MET MY *BEST FRIEND.*

I DIDN'T DOUBT YOU FOR A *SECOND,* OPTIMUS.

VOOSH

CHAKK
VOOSH
I KNOW.

ENERGON-!
GET OFF OF ME...
ENERGON-!
URRG... MEGATRON... I NEED HELP...
SHUT UP, STARSCREAM. I'LL HEAR NO MORE OF YOUR GIMPERING.
CHOOM

WHAT HAVE YOU ACCOMPLISHED, PRIME? WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO DO WITH THE ALLSPARK- AND NO STAR?
ENERGON-!
WHAT-TZZT- DO WE DO, MASTER?

FIRST WE FIND SOME ENERGON FOR THE HATCHLINGS... THEN WE FIND THE ALLSPARK.
ENERGON-!
ENERGON-!

AND, BY PRIMUS... IF I HAVE TO TRAVEL ACROSS THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE TO DO SO... I SHALL KILL EVERY LAST AUTOBOT!

YOU WANTED TO TEACH ME A LESSON IN *POWER*, MEGATRON. AND I *DID* LEARN.

I LEARNED SOMETHING YOU WILL *NEVER* UNDERSTAND.

WHEN SENTINEL TOLD ME I WAS A *PRIME*, IT WASN'T THE *RESPONSIBILITY* I REJECTED.

IT WAS THE *UNEARNED POWER*.

YOU SAW *ME*, AND YOU THOUGHT ONLY OF *YOURSELF*.

YOUR *EVERY DECISION* HAS BEEN MADE OUT OF *JEALOUSY* FOR SOMETHING THAT I NEVER *TOOK*.

IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO BE A GREAT *PRIME*—TO HAVE GREATNESS *HANDED* TO YOU.

FIRST, I HAVE TO BE A GREAT *OPTIMUS*.

OPTIMUS... YOU...

AND MAYBE SOMEDAY I *WILL* BE.

BUT YOU, BROTHER? I KNOW NOW, YOU WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND. YOU WILL NEVER BE WORTHY OF THE ALLSPARK, SO IT BECOMES MY DUTY TO KEEP IT FROM YOU.
I TAKE SOLACE THAT SOMEWHERE IN THE VASTNESS OF THE UNIVERSE, THERE MUST EXIST THE WORLD OUR MENTOR DREAMED OF.
A WORLD OF PEACE AND FREEDOM.
AND WHILE YOU TRY TO TIGHTEN YOUR GRIP AROUND A PLANET THAT DOESN'T RESPECT YOU—THAT ONLY FEARS YOU...
...I SHALL FIND THAT WORLD.
FOR SENTINEL PRIME.
FOR FREEDOM.
THE END